



Printed For I Phillips & M Wotton in St Pauls Church

A N
E A R N E S T
I N V I T A T I O N
T O T H E
Sacrament
O F T H E
L O R D ' s S u p p e r .

W H E R E I N
All the *Excuses* that Men ordinarily
make for their not Coming to the
H O L Y C O M M U N I O N , are answered.

By J O S . G L A N V I L L , Late
Minister of B A T H

The Tenth Edition ; with Addition of
P R A Y E R S , &c.

L O N D O N , Printed for J. Phillips, at
at the *King's-Arms* in St. Paul's Church-Yard ;
and I. Wotton, at the *Three Daggers* in
Fleet-Street. MDCCXX.

I

I

w
to
an

T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in G O D,

P E T E R,

Lord Bishop of

BATH *and* WELLS.

My L O R D,

I *Address'd the First Edition of this little Book to Your Lordship, when You were newly declared Bishop of this Diocess; and what I then writ was to congratulate Your Lordship, and to signify how happy I esteem this Clergy and People, in such a Relation. Your*
A 3 Lordship

AN
MARINE
INVESTIGATION
OF THE
SOUTHERN
OF THE
LORDS SUPPLY

Holy Communion, etc. and other
 make for the most Communion for the
 All the same, the most ordinary

BY ORDER OF THE
MANAGER OF B.M.A.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE
THE TRUTH ABOUT THE



T O T H E

Right Reverend Father in G O D,

P E T E R,

Lord Bishop of

BATH *and* WELLS.

My L O R D,

I Address'd the First Edition of this little Book to Your Lordship, when You were newly declared Bishop of this Diocess; and what I then writ was to congratulate Your Lordship, and to signify how happy I esteem this Clergy and People, in such a Relation. Your

A 3.

Lordship

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Lordship hath now govern'd several Tears among us, and fully answer'd the Expectations of those that knew You, and the Desires of those that did not, in the Wisdom and Justice of Your Managements ; so that at this Time Acknowledgments are more proper than Congratulations ; and particularly, we ought, with humble Thankfulness, to own Your Lordship's Care and Zeal for the great Interest of the Church and Religion that I press in this Discourse, the Success of which hath been very encouraging, and particularly in this Place, where, among about Eleven hundred Communicable Persons, Inhabitants of the Three Parishes within this City, I gave the Sacrament this last Easter to above Eight hundred of them. I pray God to continue, and to increase this Number : Through his Grace and Help I hope to give yet a better Account of the Regularity of this People.

I writ

The Epistle Dedicatory.

I writ the Discourse for their Use, and it had gone no farther if I could have got Transcripts enow for them : In Defect of such, I committed it to the Press, and understand since, that God hath blest these poor Endeavours in divers other Places with Success, much beyond my Expectations.

I have often thought since of writing other little Manuals, concerning Hearing, Prayer, Meditation, and such like, chiefly for the Needs of those of mine own Charge, with Reference also to a more publick Benefit ; but my great and constant Business of preaching twice a Week, and Attendance every Day, and almost every Hour of it, on the Church, or other Services of his Peopbe, will not hitherto permit.

The Epistle Dedicatory;

These are Times in which our utmost Diligence is necessary, not only for the Reducing the Mifs-led on the one hand, but for the Exciting the Cold and Unconcern'd on the other : And 'tis hard to say from which the Church hath suffered more, either the Mistakes of Zeal, or the Want of it. We, Your Lordship's Clergy of this Diocess, besides the other common Considerations of Duty, and Spiritual Rewards, have the incentives of Your Lordship's Encouragement and Example; and if we are remiss, our Negligence will be inexcusable, and our Guilt will be aggravated by our Privilege.

My LORD,

*I pray God give You farther Success in Your pious Endeavours for the Good of this poor, broken, and divided Church, and make all the Ministers of it, faithful and industrious in their great and most
honura-*

T O T H E

PEOPLE of my CHARGE.

My Dear Neighbours,

Although *We* of the Publick Ministry cannot expect to do *much* by our Perswasions and Endeavours in such an Age as this; Yet we ought to persevere in our Work with Courage and Resolution, and not suffer our selves to be overborn by any Difficulties, or Discouragements whatsoever: For Duty belongs to us, but Events unto God, who will reward the Labourers whatever be the Success of their Labours. And as every Minister of Religion ought to be active and resolv'd in the *Work* and *Patience* of the Gospel; so he shall then best acquit himself in it, when he studies the *proper needs* of the Age, and Place wherein he lives, and accordingly directs his Endeavours to provide for them. Now there is
nothing

12 An Earnest Invitation.

nothing, that I know, that is wanted more in our Days, than a due Sense of the Necessity and Advantages of the *Holy Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, the general Neglect, not to say Contempt, of which, hath, I am perswaded, been a great and sad Occasion of the Debauchery and Divisions that are amongst us ; and I verily think, that there could not be a more effectual Means to reduce us to *Sobriety* and *Union*, than a frequent and reverent Use of that Divine Institution. From this Perswasion, I have earnestly, and often, as you can bear me witness, pressed this great Duty upon your Consciences, and affectionately recommended it to your Practice. I have represented its *Nature* with all possible *Plainness*, and urged its *Necessity* with a *Vigour* in some Measure suitable to so great an *Occasion* : I have told you the *Danger* of wilful Neglect on the one Hand, and the *Benefits* of due Performance, one the other ; but notwithstanding all, there are too many of you, that seem yet insensible,
and

The Epistle Dedicary.

*honourable Calling; that we may gain
the Favour and Approbation of God, and
then 'tis no Matter how we are treated, or
thought of by perverse and sensual Men
So ever prayeth*

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most Faithful, And

Most Obedient Servant

Jos. Glanvill.

A 5

TO

April

1864
April 1st
To the Hon. Secy of the Navy
Washington

Dear Sir
I have the honor to acknowledge
the receipt of your letter of the 28th

and in reply to inform you that

the same has been forwarded

to

the

E
n
o
v
M
A
f
n
F
(
m
fl
C
fl
o
C
fl
t
T
e
C

to the Lord's Supper. 15

by *all*, as far as the Subject will bear.

In the pursuit of what I intend, I mean, by God's help to proceed in this order.

(1) I shall discourse with all convenient Brevity, and Plainness, on the *Nature and Design* of the Lord's Supper. And,

(2) Give the General *Reasons* to enforce the Duty; under which Head, I shall apply my self to Two sorts of Refusers, *viz.* Those that neglect
(1) On the Account of pure *carelessness* and *stupidity*, and (2) Those that stand off upon the score of *mistakes* of *Conscience*.

In treating with the former, I shall shew that their obstinate Refusal takes off all Pretence they can have to Christianity, and puts them into the state of Infidels and Heathens; yea into a worse Condition than *that* of *meer unbelievers*. As to the other sort, *viz.* The *dissatisfied* in *Conscience*; I shall consider their *Reasons against Communicating* according to the way of our Church, and shew that they are no *justifiable*

16 An Earnest Invitation

justifiable Grounds, why they should refuse to joyn with us in that solemn part of Christian Worship.

C H A P. II.

I Begin with the *First*, The Nature of the *Lord's Supper*. Concerning *this* there hath been an infinite diversity of Opinions and Disputes ; the Effects of which Differences have been much *Noise* and many *Tumults*, *Schisms*, and *Wars*, with a vast heap of Mischiefs and Calamities to the Christian World : I shall not therefore trouble you with any thing of needless Controversy, or Notion, on this Argument ; but state it so far only, as it relates to *practice* ; and I shall take all I have to say about it from the *Word of God*, the best Rule to guide us in the Enquiry. And if *disputing* Men would have been content with *its* Declarations in this Matter, all the Trouble and Mischiefs had been avoided. But this
hath

to the Lord's Supper. 13

and unconcerned. I have publickly desired those that are either *ignorant* or *disatisfy'd*, to accept of my private Help and Instruction, and have offer'd them the utmost of my Assistance for their better Information and Direction. And after all this, I know not what I can do more to serve you in this great Interest of yours, except I put something in your Hands that may be ever with you, and that you may consider on all Occasions. *Publick Teachings*, by word of Mouth, are too much looked upon as *customary Exercises*, and on that Account they lose their Force with *some*; and the greatest part, even of the better Auditors, cannot keep their Minds so close and intent to a Discourse *spoken* as to receive it in its full Evidence and Power; or though the Hearers are never so diligent and careful, our Words are forgotten quickly, and the Affections that they raise vanish without any considerable Effect upon their Wills. For which Reasons I have resolv'd upon this Course, to cast some of the plain Things

14 An Earnest Invitation

things I have preach'd concerning the *Holy Sacrament* into Writing; That those who are unfit for that great Duty by reason of *Ignorance*, may have the properest means of Instruction that I can provide for them always in their Power, and when they please, before their Eyes: And that those that *deprive* themselves of the Benefits of this most excellent Ordinance, by reason of the *Mistakes* of their erring Understandings, may also have the most suitable help I can give, towards the setting their Minds right, and the reconciling them to their Privilege, and their Duty.

For these purposes, I shall (as my manner is) represent what I have to say, in the most *distinct* and *easy* way I can contrive, avoiding all things that are *hard*, either in *notion* or *expression*; and strive, as near as possible, to speak all along to the most ordinary Understandings. For I look upon *plainness* as the best Dress for Truth, and my great Care and Endeavour constantly is, to be *understood*

by

to the Lord's Supper. 17

hath been the Misery ; some govern
their Thoughts of this Holy Instituti-
on by corrupt and *novel Traditions*,
and others by meer vain and *arbitrary*
Fancies ; Yea, Those who have been
right in the main, have yet so mingled
the plain Truth with *Allusions*, and
spoken of it in such a *phantastical*, and
uncertain Way, that ordinary Under-
standings have been confounded, and
those that are for downright Sense,
without the mixtures of Imagination,
have not been able to tell what to
make of *that*, which they heard de-
scribed in such a fanciful and various
Fashion. This particularly hath been
my own case ; I had heard Men
preach so humourfomly, and so di-
versly about the *Sacrament* ; so much
out of their *own* Heads, and so *little*
out of the *Oracles* of God, That I was
quite bewilder'd and lost, and came
at last to that pass, that I *knew nothing*
of all of it ; which Ignorance, and con-
fusion of Thoughts, was the natural
effect of such Discourses ; For when
Men once ramble in the way of *phrases*,
metaphors,

18 An Earnest Invitation

metaphors, and *conceits*, as they lose themselves, so they perfectly puzzle and amuse those others whom they should instruct. I therefore betook my self to the *plain Expressions* of *Scripture* concerning this matter; in *them* I found an easy Account of the *nature* and *design* of this Divine Ordinance. And whither shall we go to enquire after it, but to the Words of *Institution* themselves? *These* I shall consider *first* and then gather together those other Passages of Scripture, which tend to the further explication of it.

(1.) The Words of Institution are *Mat. 26.* [Take, Eat, This is my Body] *v. 26.* And drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Testament, *v. 27* 28.] To which is added in the Gospel of St. Luke [Do this in Remembrance of me, Luke 22, 19.] These words I shall severally explain, and then infer from them what is the *Nature* and *Design* of the Holy Appointment.

Take Eat, This is my Body —
And, This is my Blood — Here
take Notice, That Body and Blood

to the Lord's Supper. 19

do not relate to the *Bread and Wine* but to the *Actions, Eat and Drink*, as appears plainly in the

Original, 'Tis not *this Bread*, and *this Wine*, are my *Body and Blood*, but

T⁸⁷⁰, not
870

The Sacramental eating and drinking of it. In this Christ's Body and Blood, viz. His Incarnation and Sufferings are represented to us. And yet by a Figure, the consecrated Elements may be call'd his Body and Blood also; so the Form at the Eating the Paschal Supper was. This is the bread of affliction which our Fathers did eat in Egypt; Not the very same, but a Memorial of it, and the State of Bondage from which they were deliver'd. Thus, 1 Cor. 10.3,4. Manna is call'd spiritual bread, and the Rock spiritual drink; and that Rock, Christ: Not that they could possibly be so in the Letter, but they signify'd that spiritual food, and were Tokens of Christ's Presence. And thus the Sacramental Bread and Wine may be call'd his Body and Blood, that is, Figures and Representations of them; and that

20 An Earnest Invitation

that not *barely* of his *Sufferings*, but
 (as the * Father notes) of
 * Basil.
 all the *Myſteries* of the *In-*
carnation which are *ſignified* and *inclu-*
ded. Thus anciently the *Elements*
 were call'd *Figures*, *Symbals*, *Images*,
ſenſible Things inſtead of *ſpiritual*, and
 we know 'tis in common uſe to call the
Picture by the Name of that it repre-
 ſents, as *this is a Man* and *that a Bird*
 or *Beaſt*. So that there is no ground
 for the *Doctrin*e of *Transubſtantiation*
 in theſe words, as the *Roman Church*
 pretends. But I wave *Diſputes*, and
 come to the next *Expreſſion* to be con-
 ſider'd.

[*This is the New Te-*
 * Διαθήκη *ſtament, or * Covenant in*
my Blood.] viz The *Sign*
 and *Seal* of the *Covenant* made in his
Blood; a *Covenant* wherein *God* enga-
 ged to Beſtow on us *Pardon* of *Sin*,
 and *Eternal Life*; and we promiſe
faithful and *ſincere Obedience*: Thus in
 the eldeſt times, *Eating* and *Drinking*
 were *Covenant Rites*: As we may ſee
 in the *Compacts* between *Iſaac* and
Abime-

to the Lord's Supper. 21

Abimelech, Gen. 26. 30 And between *Jacob* and *Laban*, Gen. 31. 44, 46. So that the Sacrament is not a *bare Sign*, but 'tis the *Seal* of God's gracious *Covenant* made with us in his Son.

[*Do this in Remembrance of me*]

It has always been usual to commemorate, and remember Benefactors and great Mercies by *Feasts* and *Festivals*. The Heathens had their * *Feasts* in Memory of their *Heroes*; And the *Passover*, a Type of this

* *As αἰνέται
& αἰνέται.*

Supper, was appointed to preserve the Memory of the *Israelites* deliverance out of *Egypt*, *Exod* 12. 14. The *Lamb* was eaten with *bitter herbs*, to commemorate the *bitterness* of their *Servitude*; the *Red Wine* was a Remembrance of their Blood which *Pharaoh* spilt; and the *unleavened Bread*, to remember them, that they carried such out of *Egypt* at their *Departure*: And thus our Blessed Saviour hath appointed this *Holy Rite*, to imprint upon us the *Memory* of what he hath *done* and *suffered* for us, that

22 An Earnest Invitation

that we might not forget our Deliverance by him from a Bondage greater than *Egyptian*.

And now from *these* main Passages thus explain'd, 'tis easy to infer, That *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a Memorial Feast, appointed for a solemn Remembrance of Christ our Lord; and a Seal of the Covenant that God hath made with us in him.*

Two things then it is principally design'd for, (1) to Remember us of our Lord and Saviour, and (2) to be a Seal of the Covenant of Grace. Of each briefly.

(1) 'Tis for a Remembrance not only of his *Person*, or only of his *Sufferings*, or any other particular Part of his Ministry; but we are by it required *thankfully* and *affectionately* to call to mind, *All that he hath done* and *all that he hath suffered*; His *Life*, *Doctrine*, and *Laws*: His *Passion*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*; His *Victory* over *Sin*, *Death*, and *Hell*; and the *gracious Covenant* that God hath made with

to the Lord's Supper. 23

with us through him, *These* are all included in his *Body* and *Blood*, (as I intimated before) of which the *Holy Sacrament* is a *Sign* and *Memorial*: And the Remembrance of *these* which we are called to by the *Divine Institution*, is not only some slight and passing Thoughts, but a solemn and most serious fixing of them upon our Minds, in order to the inflaming of our Affections with Love, and our Wills with Resolution, that we may live answerably to that excellent Religion of the *Holy Jesus* which we profess.

O (2) 'Tis the Seal of a Covenant, [*The New Testament in my Blood*] The Covenant is, That God will give Pardon of Sin, and Eternal Life; upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance. This He seals to us in the Sacrament, and assures us, that he, for his part, will make good his Promises; and we on our seal, that we will endeavour to perform the Conditions. So that the Lord's Supper is a Sacrament by which we confirm those Engagements we are entered into at Baptism. Then our Sureties

24 An Earnest Invitation

ties undertook for us, that we should be faithful in the Covenant; and in *this* Holy Ordinance we take all those Obligations upon our *selves*; and in our *own* Persons promise to act according to them.

This plainly and in short, is the *Nature* and *Design* of the *Holy Sacrament*, concerning which there are some other Expressions in Scripture, which I shall consider briefly, in order to the further Explication of the Sacred Mystery. The chief are *these*

'Tis called (1) *The Cup of Blessing* 1 Cor. 10. 16. (2) *The Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. And in the Duty 'tis said (3) *That we shew the Lord's Death* 1 Cor. 11. 26.

(1) *The Cup of Blessing*, viz. *Of Praise and Thanksgiving*. Our Saviour *Mat. 26.* gave Thanks when he took the Cup. The Jews used to conclude their *Pascal* Supper with a Cup of Wine, at which time they sung a Hymn, and therefore called it the

Cup

to the Lord's Supper. 25

Cup of Praising and

* *Blessing*. And the Hea-
thens also after their
Feasts had their * *Cups*
of *Praise* to their Gods;
which some take to
be the *Cup of Devils*

* Ποτήριον
ὕψις ἡσπεως καὶ
εὐλογίας.

* Ἀγαθὴ
δαίμων, ὅτι
δίδος σωτῆρος.

mentioned by the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10
21. So that by this we are taught to
remember our Lord at his Table,
with *praise* and *grateful* acknowledg-
ments: And therefore the Ancients
from hence call'd the *Lord's Supper*,
the *Holy Eucharist*, namely, a *Feast*
of *Thanksgiving*, and the Solemnity
was always attended with a Hymn
of *Praise*.

(2) *Communion*

(or * *Communication*)
of the *Body* and *Blood*

* Κοινωνία.

of *Christ*, viz. The *Sacrament* is a
Sacred Rite, in which God *communi-*
cates and imparts to all worthy Re-
ceivers, the *Benefits* of *Christ's Incar-*
nation and *Sufferings*. He doth then
satisfy, *confirm*, and *solemnly* exhibit

B

them

26 An Earnest Invitation

them to those that duly attend upon that Divine Appointment.

(3) [*As often as ye eat — — ye do shew the Lord's Death*] viz. (1) *Declare* unto Men with Joy and Glorifying, that we believe he *died* for *such* Purposes, and that he hath procured inestimable Benefits for us by his Death. That therefore we will adhere, and stick unto him; and that neither *Death nor Life shall separate us from the Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And (2) import our shewing and declaring *this* also unto God, and pleading it with him for his Pardon and his Grace, for the sake of that meritorious Passion which we set forth, and commemorate. These Passages fall under the Account I have before given of the Ordinance, and shew *how* we are to *remember* our Lord in it, and *what* we may expect in so doing.

Thus briefly of the *Nature and Design* of the Sacrament. I might have run the Matter into a large Discourse, but I resolve on Brevity. In what I have said, you will find all Things that are

to the Lord's Supper. 27.

are *necessary* and *essential* to the *Ordinance*: For the *Niceties* and *Disputes* that are about it, you need not trouble your selves with them; but so *much* of it as I have represented (I mean in the Substance of the Particulars) 'tis fit you should know: And therefore I intreat you, especially those of the more ordinary Understanding, to return back and fix your Thoughts a while upon those Periods; and read them over and over again, 'till you have a *clear* and *distinct* Apprehension of the Subject they explain. I know the Thoughts of most are very *confused* and much in the *Dark* about it, and while they are *so*, they cannot demean themselves as they ought in the Performance of the Duty, nor receive those Benefits that otherwise they might from it. I beseech you therefore not to content your selves with a *single* and *running* Reading; Many Divine Truths will not enter into our Minds at first Sight; or, if they do, they are gone as soon as they are receiv'd: Though they are never so *plainly*

B 2

express'd,

28 An Earnest Invitation

express'd, yet they many times, *seem dark* 'till we look again ; or though they strike our Mind fully, yet they pass out of Memory, except we reflect, and think them over ; I hope therefore you will do your selves this right ; And I thus urge you to Consideration of my Accounts, not as if I fancied I had made any *Discoveries* in them which were not made before ; (No *These* are known Things among the intelligent sort of Christians) but I do it, because I speak to the *meaner*, and *less improved* Understandings. And, perhaps from the Representation of the Affair which I have given, the *others* also may receive the Advantage of a clearer Order and Method to their Thoughts, and be delivered from many *unnecessary* and *uncertain* Notions that they have imagined to be of great Consequence to be believed and known, when either they are not *true*, or not *considerable*.

CHAP.

to the Lord's Supper. 29

CHAP. III.

I Come now to the main Thing I design, *viz.* (II.) To *urge* this great Duty which I have thus explain'd, and to do what I can to perswade you to the conscientious Practice of it. Now there are two Things that commonly oblige Men to Action, namely Considerations of *Duty*, and of *Interest*. And there are *both* here in the highest Degree, to ingage us. I shall discourse of each.

(1.) We have the Motive, and Reason of *Duty*, and *Duty* in *such* Circumstances, as have the greatest Obligation in them. A LORD who hath all *Right* to our Obedience both by *Nature* and by *dear Purchase*, hath *commanded* us to do *this*. And, A SAVIOUR, who hath rescued us from the Jaws of Hell and Death, and hath procured for us endless Life and Glory; hath required it of us. Here is the *Authority* of just *Power*, and the

30 An Earnest Invitation

Obligations of astonishing Love. We are bound by the *Submission* we owe a Sovereign Lord, and by the *Gratitude* we owe an adorable *Benefactor*. The Son of God, the King of both the Worlds, the Redeemer of Men, 'tis He that commands, and his *Commandments* are not grievous; had he put upon our Necks a Yoke heavier than the *Jewish Ceremonies*; had he enjoyn'd a greater Number of costly and laborious Rites than those, and required so many of such Services from us, as would have taken up all our Time, and imployed all our Strength, and wearied all our Powers; yet these we ought to have observed without *Repining*, and thought all but small Homage to his Greatness, and small Acknowledgment of his Love. All these had been *Nothing* in compare with what he hath done for us freely without Merit or Obligation; *Nothing*, to his leaving the Bosom of the Father, and the Glories of the Upper World, and the Hallelujahs of the Blessed; *Nothing*, to his descending to a World of Infamy and Woe; *Nothing*, to his suffering

to the Lord's Supper 31

suffering the Scorns and Contradictions of Sinners, the Death of the Cross and the Wrath of God : So that we had been wretchedly ungrateful should we have stuck at any of *these*, or as much as *murmured* at them : But our Lord hath not given us any such Tryal of our Love and Obedience : He hath delivered the Word from the Yoke of Ceremonial Bondage ; and, besides *Baptism*, hath appointed but *this one Right* for us to observe ; A *Right*, that is neither *troublesome* nor *costly*, *tedious* nor *laborious* : And what Prodigies of baseness shall we make our selves, if we refuse to take Notice of this his *gracious* Institution ? With what Face can we look up and call our selves by his Name ? How shamefully are we upbraided by the Practice of those we count *barbarous* ? Let us look abroad into the World, and consider the most *brutish* Idolaters : They will cut their beloved *Flesh*, and burn their dearest *Children*, and sometimes suffer themselves to be *crush'd* to Death by the Carriages that bear their *Idols*,

32 An Earnest Invitation

because their *Infernal* Gods require, and are pleased with such Testimonies of their Homage: Hath the *Devil* such *obsequious* Servants? Are those *Cruel Rites*, which he appoints, observed with so much Duty? Will those poor Wretches do, and suffer any thing, rather than displease their *ugly Deities*; And are we *Christians*, professed Servants of the Son of God, our Sovereign and Redeemer, and do we neglect *this* his *main, just, and gracious* Appointment? Is *this* too much to do for him? And do we owe him so much *less* than *Cannibals* do their *Idols*; Certainly those Men of the *Desart*, those wilde *Savages* of the Woods, shall rise up in *Judgment* with such a *Generation* of pretending *Christians*, and shall condemn it. Methinks their *Diligence* and *Exactness* in those hard and painful Services, should cover us with Blushing and Confusion, at our Carelessness and Neglect of the easy Duty our Lord requires from us: And we shall see great Reason to be ashamed of our Omissions; if we consider.

That

to the Lord's Supper. 33

That our blessed Redeemer had lived a Life of Poverty and Dishonour for our sake: He had instructed us in the Way of Happiness by his excellent *Doctrine* and *Precepts*, and had gone before us in an incomparable *Example*; And now he was just about to *complete* his *Love*, by *offering* himself unto *Death* to deliver us from it, and thereby to give an Instance of the most amazing Goodness that ever was: At *this time* he enjoins his Disciples to do something in Remembrance of him. And Lord! What is *sufficient* to be done in Memory of such *Love*? Had he required the dearest of our Blood, and the *choicest* of our *substance* to be offered to him in Acknowledgment, should we have thought *such* Demands *unreasonable*? Would ordinary Ingenuity have scrupled to make those Sacrifices for such Kindness? But he calls not for *these*, He looks for no *First-born* of our *Bodies*, nor *Chief* of our *Flocks*; No, he appoints only a *Feast of Memorial*, and commands us to remember his Love in that. And

34 An Earnest Invitation

shall we not observe him in so small a *Matter* ? Hath he not *deserved* to be *remembered* by us, or do we know any *better* way to signify our Remembrance of him, than that which himself hath prescribed ? Should we not do as much as this at the Request of an *ordinary* dying Friend ? And is not the *greatest* and the *best* that ever Creatures had, worthy of such a *Testimony of Affection* from us ? I am sure there is no one can be so brutish as to deny the *Justness* of the *Duty*, and methinks none should be so unworthy as to refuse Compliance with it.

I beseech you therefore, if the *Considerations* of Duty can do any thing with you ; if there be any obligation in the highest *Authority* ; if there be any *Allurement* in the *sweetest Love* ; if your *Profession* of *Subjection* to *Christ* be not only a *Compliment*, and if he have any real Interest in your Souls, give this Proof then of your *being in Earnest* ; that which you would be thought ; refuse no more of his *Invitations*, neglect no more of his *Calls* ; consider the *Express-ness*

to the Lord's Supper. 35

ness of his Command, and that this Law is *peculiarly* his: *His* in such a Sense as (*Baptism* excepted) *no other Law is*. For his other Injunctions are but *Inforcements* of the Laws that God hath written in the *Old Scriptures*, and in our Hearts; but this is his own proper Commandment; by obeying him in *this*, we particularly own him as our *Law-giver* and by refusing we *renounce* him.

But if the *Consideration* of *Duty* should not prove so powerful with you, there are others which generally use to be of more force, namely, *those* taken from our *Interest*. And here,

(II.) I desire you to consider the great *Benefits* that a worthy Communicant receives from the Holy Sacrament. *This* is not a meer barren Ceremony, or unprofitable Rite, but an Instrument and Means to produce and to convey unspeakable Blessings to us. Here we receive,

(I.) *Confirmation* of our *Faith*: All Habits are increas'd by being exercised; and this Ordinance requires great
Exercises

36 An Earnest Invitation

Exercises of the Grace of Faith: For here we make a *solemn* Declaration of it, and thereby bind it stronger upon our Souls. And to the Exercise of this *Divine Grace*, and the sincere and publick Profession of it, there is no doubt but God will super-add his special Aid and Blessing, that out of *Weakness it may be made strong*. So that if your Faith be *weak and trembling*, if you are perplex'd with Vexations, Doubts and Temptations to Unbelief, apply yourselves to this holy Ordinance as to the proper Remedy. *Declare* your Faith, and pray for more. If you *believe*, God will help your *Unbelief*, Mark 9. 25.

(2) Our *Repentance* will be heightened by our due Communicating at the Lord's Table, and that in respect of all its great Acts, *viz.* 1 *Sense and Sorrow* for Sin. 2 *Confession* of it; and 3. *Aversation* from it. For the First.

(1) The *Evil* of Sin is never so well discerned as in its effects. It is *sweet in the mouth*, but *bitter* in the belly: And there is no greater Evidence of its Vileness

to the Lord's Supper. 37

ness and Malignity, than that we have in the Sufferings of our Lord, which are set before us in the holy Sacrament. And certainly Sin must need be an *accursed* Thing (saith the considering Communicant) that the *blessed Jesus* must thus be made a *Curse* for it ; that is doubtless a mighty Evil, that cannot be expiated but by the Blood of God : And Sin, without question hath unspeakable Malignity in it, since it laid such a Load of Wrath upon the Shoulders of Omnipotence, as made him complain, and sweat, and groan, and die. The good man hath never such a Sense of the Evil of Sin, as when he is awakened by the *sign* and *images* of Christ's *Sufferings*, and when he sees it writ in Characters of *Blood*. Besides the *baseness* and *ingratitude* of Sin is made evident in all the Representations of the Divine Love which we have at the Lord's Table. We see *there*, that it is an abuse of the greatest and most tender Goodness, and there is nothing that more affects ingenuous Souls, than the Sense of such Unworthiness,

thiness, and this will beget the liveliest the S
and most kindly Sorrow. *They shall Good*
look upon me whom they have pierced, and and
they shall mourn, Zech. 12. 10. The The
tenderest Grief ariseth from the Appre. Con
hensions of *abused Goodness* : And the ment
more ingenuous Spirits are sooner est,
brought to be troubled for their Sins in th
by a Sense of *Mercy* than of *Terrors*. hum
Now there is nothing that gives a truer mer
or greater Representation of *Divine* (
Grace and Kindness, than the *Holy Sa- tanc*
crament, and therefore this is a very Per
effectual Means to beget and increase from
penitential Sense and Sorrow for Sin. Pec
And upon this, is n
the

(2.) Follows *Confession*, which is
one Expression of *these* : The Appre-
hension of an *angry Majesty* drives a
Sinner to Desperation, and prevents
his *Confession*. When the Lord ask'd
the Man in the Gospel wih some
Severity, *How camest thou hither, not*
having a Wedding Garment ? he was
speechless. Terrors beget stupifying
Fear, which stops the Mouth, and
damms up all the Passages to, and from
the

to the Lord's Supper. 39

the Soul, whereas the Discoveries of Goodness and Mercy open the Heart, and melt the Seal upon the Lips: They invite Supplications, and beget Confessions, and therefore the *Sacrament*, which is a *Memorial* of the greatest, sweetest, and freest Mercy tends in the Nature of it to the producing humble Confessions and Acknowledgments: And it doth it likewise,

(3.) As to the *Aversation* of Repentance by the same way. The Top and Perfection of Repentance is to turn from our *evil Ways*; God invites his People to this, by the Argument that is most powerfully pressed upon us in the *Sacrament*, namely, *That of his pardoning Mercy and Kindness. Return thou backsliding Israel — and I will not cause mine Anger to fall upon you*, Jer. 3. 12. His Readiness to pardon is the great Motive to return, and the *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of the *Covenant* of Pardon. Despair of Mercy keeps Men on in a sinful Course. *Thou sayest there is no Hope*, say they in the Prophet, Jer, 2. 25. They thought their Case desperate

40 An Earnest Invitation.

rate, and it follows, *I have loved Strangers and after them will I go.* The Devils persist irreclaimably in their hatred of God and Goodness, because the unalterable Sentence is past upon them: And if Men come once to quit their Hopes of Happiness, they will also in a short Time quit the Thoughts of God and Virtue, and give themselves up to the Swing of their Appetites and Inclinations; Whereas on the other side *Hope* is the great *Encouragement* and *Spring* of *Endeavour*, and where *this* is enlivened by a *full* and *quick* Sense of pardoning Goodness, that Soul will feel a *mighty* *Motive* to reform and turn from Sin. Now the *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of that *Covenant* which assures us of *Grace* and *Pardon*, and the firmest *Ground* of our best *Hopes*, and most glorious *Expectations*. Thus the *Grace* of *Repentance* receives *Increase* in all its *Exercises*, from this *Divine Institution*. And so doth,

(3) That other most excellent *Grace*, *Love*, both as it relates, 1. to
God,

to the Lord's Supper. 41

God, and 2. to our Neighbour.

(1) In the *Holy Sacrament* the *Mysteries of Divine Love* are unfolded in all their *Circumstances of Wonder*. There we see *pardoning, redeeming, bleeding, dying Love*: *Love*, suffering for all our sake; and *Love* procuring all things for our *Interests*; *Love* descending to the *Grave* and *Hell*, and *Love* triumphing over both: *Love* leading *Captivity captive*, and obtaining *Gifts for Men*, *Light*, *Life*, and a glorious *Immortality*. *Such Love*, and *Love* beyond what we can say, and beyond what we can think, is represented at the *Holy Sacrament*, and this must needs fire every Soul that is not as cold as the Earth, and as dead as the Grave. Love begets love, and one Flame kindles another. And if we think of this Love, and consider it as we ought when we come to the *Enter-tainment of Love*, this would excite our *Affections*, and turn our Souls into holy *Flames*, and so our *dead Powers* will *live*, and our dull sleepy *Affections* will awake into new *Spirit* and
vigour,

42 An Earnest Invitation

Vigour : We shall live by Love, and act by Love 'till we are received into the earnest Embraces of Love, and swallowed up in that immense Ocean of Love. Now Love is the *best* and most *pleasing* of all our *Passions* ; and Love to God is the *best* and most *pleasant* of all *Loves* : A Love free from those Tortures and Disquiets, that Shame, and those Griefs that are produced by Absence and Uncertainties. Loss and Guilt when this Passion is placed upon other Objects. This Love is the Fountain of Delight, and the Spring of Action that sweetens our Troubles, and stirs up our Endeavours ; that makes Duty agreeable and Difficulties easy, that is a *present* Heaven, and the foretaste of a *greater*. This also,

(2.) Tends to the encreasing our Love one to another. It is a *Feast* of Love at our *Father's House* and our *Lord's Table* : The *Guests* are *Brethren*, and professing *Children* of Love. Here are all the *Ingagements* to Love set before us : The Love of our *Lord* and

on to the Lord's Supper. 43

and his exprefs Commandment, *John*
13. 34. The *Relations* we stand in to
God, and to one another. We cannot
well chuse but *pity* our *Brother's Infirmi-*
ties, and *pardon* each others *Faults*,
when we see how much God hath
pitied our *Miseries*, and how *graciously*
he hath *pardoned* our *Offences*. Our
Animosities will be abated, and our
Thoughts of Malice and Revenge will
die. Our *Indifferences* will be *Kind-*
ness, and our *Kindness Love*, when we
consider the inexpressible Love of our
common Lord, and the blessed *Effects* of
that Love : *Reconciliation* made, *Happi-*
ness procured, and *Sin* and *Death*, and
Hell conquered. A Sense of *these* will
swallow up all our little *Piques* and
Displeasures, and so fill us with the
Thoughts of *Gratitude* and *Love*, that
we shall forget our *Enmities*, and im-
brace our *Enemies*, and spread abroad
our *Kindness* upon all about us, yea,
and extend it to all the World in *Prayers*
and good *Wishes*. And now, this *Spirit*
of *Charity* is a most *Divine Temper*, and
a great *Happiness* : 'Tis a *sweet,*
serene,

44 An Earnest Invitation

ferene and *pleasant* thing, a *Reward* to itself, if there were no other : Whereas *Envy* and *Malice*, and all the degrees of them are an Hell, and Torment to the Soul ; they are great Sins and their own Punishment : And a right Use of the Holy Sacrament will abate, and remove *those*, and therein also administer blessed and unspeakable *Advantages* to us.

(4.) Our *Hopes* are nobly advantaged and strengthened by this Ordinance : When the good Man considers the *Justice* and *Holiness* of God, and the *perfection* of his *Law* ; and then takes a View of his own *sinfulness*; and innumerable *Imperfections*, his Spirit fails, and his Hope is giving up the Ghost ; he sinks into Trouble, and almost into the Regions of Despair : Now all the Relief that a Man can have in such a State, is to be drawn from God's *Covenant to Pardon Sin*, and to *accept of Faith and Repentance* instead of *Perfection*. This is the Tenour of the Gospel, and the Foundation of our Hopes ! and this *Covenant* is sealed and assured to us

at

to the Lord's Supper. 45

at the *Sacrament* ; so that thence the *fainting Soul* may derive *Life* and *Quickening*. And when the drooping Christian comes from seeing God, putting his *Seal* to his *Pardon*, and to the *Promises* made him of *Eternal Life* ; his *Hopes* recover, and his *Spirits* return unto him, his *Soul* leaps for joy and all his *Powers* are full of *Content* and *Pleasure*. And over and above *this*, God is pleased at *such times especially* to vouchsafe more abundant *Manifestations* of himself to the *Soul*, sealing his *Love* upon it, and giving it so much *Assurance* as may deliver it from its unreasonable *Doubts*, and *Suspensions*, and make it in part *Partakers* of our *Master's Joy*. But this will be a *Particular* by it self. Therefore,

(5) The *Holy Sacrament* is an excellent Means to heighten a Christian's *Joy* and *Comfort*. For there we are in a *special Exercise* of our *Graces*, and by them are prepared for *Divine Peace* and *Pleasure* : that *Peace* of God, which passeth all *Understanding*, Phil. 4. 7. And this is something more than that *Content*

46 An Earnest Invitation

tent that naturally ariseth upon, and gone,
 results from the Actions of Holiness Face
 and Vertue, and is supperadded by the assure
 nearer Applications of the Spirit are o
 God to the Soul: This Pleasure and Deat
 Satisfaction God is always willing to pinef
 bestow upon us, but we by our Sins set b
 indispose our selves for it, and it is not and
 to be given out but to *prepared Souls*. wou
 And now according to the greater or shou
less Degrees of our Preparations, and Ex. Hap
 ercise of our Graces, we shall have more and
 or *less* of this *spiritual Joy* and Satisfac- Pra
 tion in our Communion. But besides Aut
 the Joy which is *special* and *extraordi- An*
nary, the Ordinance in its own Nature (C
 tends to *Delight and Pleasure*. We had we
 rais'd Storms and Tempests by our Sac
 Sins, and provoked him whom we can spi
 neither resist nor avoid: His Coun- Pa
 tenance was full of Dread and Terrors, vin
 and Death and Hell stood ready for m
 the Command to seize upon us: And up
 must it not needs fill those with Joy all
 and Transport, that were just now in m
 this dreadful State, when they shall see Se
 the Heavens cleared, and the Storms w
 gone,

to the Lord's Supper. 47

and gone, to behold Smiles and Love in the
line Face of the offended Majesty . To be
y the assured that he is *reconciled*, and his Arms
t of are open to receive us : That *Hell* and
and *Death* are destroyed, and *Life and Hap-*
g to *piness* procured for us ? All these are
Sins set before us in the *Holy Sacrament*,
not and did we use it as we ought, our Souls
als would be transported with Joy and we
or should have a delightful Foretaste of the
Ex Happiness and Triumph of the Blessed,
more and all our Lives would be *Anthems* of
sta- *Praise* and *Acclamation* to the adorable
des Author and Procurer of our Blessings.
di- And this,

(6) Is another happy Advantage
we derive, or may do, from the *Holy*
ur *Sacrament*, viz. That it hightens and
an spirits our *Gratitude* and *Praises* ;
n- Paises and Acknowledgment of *Di-*
s, *vine Favours* are all the return we can
or make for them ; and we are to offer
d up these Sacrifices for our selves and
y all the other Creatures. But the *Com-*
n *monness* of our Mercies takes away the
e *Sense* of them, and we pass them over
s with *slight* and *customary* Acknowledg-
ment :

48 An Earnest Invitation

ment : This ordinarily is our Course, and 'tis a very disingenuous and ungrateful Carriage to the bountiful Author of our Beings and Blessings : But now at the Holy Sacrament *Divine Favours* are particularly and solemnly represented, our Remembrance awakened, and our Affections excited; and the devout Soul pours it self forth into Holy Eucharist, and Thanksgiving. *The Heart is full*, and the *Mouth flows*; all the Powers rejoice, and in rejoycing break forth into Songs of Praise : And so begins that blessed *Emp'oyment*, which shall be the *Work* and *Happiness* of Heaven.

Thus we shall receive *Increase* to our *Graces* and our *Comforts*, from the frequent and due Use of the Holy Sacrament, and all other *spiritual Advantages* are contained under these. And as by these *particulars* we may encourage our selves to our Duty, so in them likewise we may see how we are to *demean* our selves in the discharge of it : *What Acts* we are to exercise, and by *what Considerations* we may stir up

cul

to the Lord's Supper. 49

our *Graces* inflame our *Affections*, and strengthen our *Resolutions*

And now the *Benefits* that I have represented to encourage and invite you to the *Holy Sacrament*, do not only concern the *thorow* and *grown Christian*, but even *all* that own the Profession of Christ's Religion, and have not renounced their *Baptismal Engagements* by *lewdness* and *impiety*: For such have *some degrees of Faith, Love, Repentance* and other *Virtues*: But the unhappiness is, that these in the most, are very low, imperfect, and in a degree that will not secure their Condition: These *Graces* must be advanced to *nobler Measures*, and to such *degrees*, as may prevail over the *contrary habits* and *dispositions*: Till the Matter come to this, we are *under the Law* and a *spirit of bondage*; in a condition of *impotency* and *weakness*, and not arrived to the *glorious Liberty and Power of the Sons of God*. This all that profess the *Christian Faith and Hopes*, ought to aim at, and endeavour after; and the *Sacrament* is the most *proper* and *likely Means*

C

for

50 An Earnest Invitation

for the advancing of our *imperfect* *graces* to that noble height. So that all professing Christians are concerned in the Duty, and capable of the Benefits. And to all those that have *such* thoughts, and *such* desires, the *Considerations* I have presented will be of moment. But for the rest that are *careless* and *unconcerned*, dead to such *spiritual* Motives, and *stupidly* *careless* of the *duty* and the *privileges* that attend it, they are not *Christians*, but do as much as in them lies, to renounce their Religion, and to put themselves into the Condition of Heathens and professed Infidels. This is that I come next to discourse.

C E A P. IV:

AFTER all my Perswasions, and more earnest Endeavours, I have too much cause to think, that some among you neglect the Holy Ordinance, not for any *reason* that they have,

to the Lord's Supper. 51

have, or can as much as *pretended*, but from meer *brutish stupidity* and *unconcernment*: They care not for these things: The Motives of Religion and another World can do nothing with them; such considerations are not felt, but pass over their Souls without making any impressions on them. And now, as for *such*, I am come to shew, That they disclaim Christ and his Religion; and are by no means to be reckoned into the Number of Christians. This I prove by the following Particulars,

First they renounce a main Article of the Creed, viz. The Communion of Saints, their Communion with (1) Christ, and their Communion with (2) one another.

(1) Christ invites us to his Table, and provides a *spiritual Entertainment* for us; and in that there is a *solemn and special intercourse* between him and his Church, which on our part consists in the *Exercise* of our Graces; and on his, in the *Benefits and Blessing* he bestows. He invites us to come and to

52 An Earnest Invitation

meet him *there* to enjoy *spiritual Correspondence* and *Communion* with him. And now, *wilfully* to refuse the Invitation, is to signify our *contempt* of the *Holy Jesus*, and to declare that we care not for any nearness of Correspondence with him. And such Neglecters in effect say, that they love the converse and communion of their vain and vicious Company: That they can spend their time *pleasantly* in their Conversation upon an Ale-Bench, or place of Idleness, or Debauches: But for *Christ Jesus* they like not his *Company*, and care not for any intimacy of Acquaintance with him. This is the direct Language of such Practices and Neglects; and what kind of *Christians* are such as these?

(2) They renounce the *Communion* of *Saints one among another*. The *holy Sacrament* is the *Feast of Charity* and *Christian Love*, and there our Affections are united to God, and to our Brethren. There we profess to be of *one Body*, *one Society*, and to be all *Members of one another*. So that those who neglect

to the Lord's Supper. 53

neglect and refuse this holy *Symbol* of Love, break off from the *Society* of *Christians*, and declare they will have nothing to do with them, as far as they are concerned in that Name and Relation : That they will not be of the flock and number that Christ calls *His* ; but would rather have their Lot with the World, and Herd of Mankind, who are Strangers to the *Covenant of Promise*, without hope, and without God in the World, Ephes. 2.12, That they value not their *Privileges*, nor care for their hopes. This is the Meaning of their neglect, and such *Christians* are the wilful Refusers.

(2) They renounce their *Baptism*. This is the Sacrament of *Entrance* into *Christianity*, and here *Engagements* are laid upon us without our knowledge or consent. At the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper we *solemnly engage and take those Obligations upon our selves*. If we refuse to do *this*, we withdraw our *consent* from what was done in our stead ; we make our *Baptism* void, and put our selves into the state of *Infidels*

54 An Earnest Invitation

and Heathens. The *Indians* were by the *Spaniards* driven to *Baptism* in droves like Cattle to the Water, without knowing what it meant, or what they did in it : Were these Christians by Virtue of such a Baptism ? Especially, is there any reason to think *those* of them such, who, as soon as they were free, made open Declarations against it. And are *those* among us *Christians*, who were *signed* with that *Religion*, when they could not *help* it ? and profess against it by their Actions and Neglects, as soon as they are in *capacity* to do it ? who *disown* it when they are *solemnly* called to put their *Seal*, and to declare their Allowance and Approbation. Their *Sureties* engaged for them, that they should *believe the Christian Faith*, keep God's *Commandments*, and *renounce the World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil* : But say *those* by their practice, what had they to do to undertake such things for us ? We will stand to no such Engagements : We are call'd on to make this good our selves in Person at the other Sacrament,

to the Lord's Supper 55

ment, or by our neglects to declare it void ; But we will not tye our selves, or own any such Engagements upon us ; we will leave our selves at large to believe what we please, and to practise what we fancy, and to gratify and worship, as long as we think fit, the World, the Devil and the Flesh, our Friends and dearest Correspondents. All this likewise is plainly signified in the neglect of the Holy Sacrament ; and therefore certainly such are no better Christians than the wilde Men of *America* : Which will farther appear, if we consider,

(3) That by it they deny the very *profession* of *Christ Jesus* ; They will not so much as claim nor pretend to him, in any *solemn significant* way. To say that we are *Christians*, and now and then to hear a *Sermon*, these are not *professions* enough ; They are but cold *declarations* of our *Opinion*, no good significations of our *Faith* ; the right profession of *Christianity* is made, by our presenting our selves at the Lord's Table, and owning our *Faith* there,

C 4

that

56 An Earnest Invitation

that is a solemn and publick confession and acknowledgment. To hear Sermons is too often but curiosity or custom, to say we are of the Christian Religion, is but a declaring in what way we have been brought up; and meer *Education Faith* is but a faint un-signifying thing; it is but Opinion, and a low degree of assent. 'Tis true, a man may be a *Formalist* and an *Hypocrite* when he comes to the Lord's Table, as well as in other lower significations of his Religion. But however he makes a *profession* and that which is *proper*, and *solemn*: Whereas the *wilfully negligent*, refuse to make any due Confession of Christ and his Religion: *They openly deny him before Men, and such he will deny before his Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. 10. 33. To withdraw from the *Profession* of *Christianity* in times of Difficulty and Persecution is a great Sin; but 'tis such a one as admits of some *extenuation* from the *frailty* of *humane Nature*, and the *temptations* of *fear* and *self-love*: But to *deny* the *Profession* of Christ in times

of

to the Lord's Supper. 57

of *Liberty* and *Encouragement*, this is an *affront* to the *Holy Jesus*, for which there is no *shadow* or *excuse*, and must arise from *contempt*, and a confess'd *neglect* of him. Such Persons publish to the World, that they own *nothing* of *Religion*, but count it a *Disparagement* to be thought any way concerned for it. And so are by no means to be accounted Christians. Further.

(4) Their refusal and neglect is a quitting and renouncing the *whole Covenant* that God hath made with Sinners in his Son. The *Covenant* on God's *Part* offers *Grace* and *Glory*, and on *ours* it binds to *Faith* and *sincere Obedience*. We are all call'd to the *Sacrament* to see God *confirming* what he hath promised, and assuring us to make good what concerns him: On the other side, we are to present our selves *there*, to profess our readiness and resolution, to perform our *part*, to keep the terms to which we were engaged, and upon which we expect the promised *Blessing*. Now if we wilfully refuse his confirmation, we with-

58 An Earnest Invitation

draw our selves from the *Covenant*, and declare that Grace and Glory, are things that we neither *care for*, nor expect; and that we will not tye our selves to any *Faith* or *Homage*; but would be as free as we can to follow the *Devil* and our *Lusts*; and so are very far from being *Christians*.

C H A P. V.

I Have thus briefly shewn you what is *signified* and *implied* in the neglect of the *Holy Sacrament*. Many of you that are guilty of this sin, would, I suppose, be loth *openly*, and in *words*, to *renounce* Christ and his Religion; and yet while you continue in this obstinate, dangerous neglect, you do it as fully as if your Tongues declared against that Name and Profession. And I think when any such as these turn *Baptists*, *Turks*, or *Jews*, they do but change to some *shew* of Religion, from none at all. So that it is no *real* dispa-
agement,

to the Lord's Supper. 59

ragement, or loss to our Church, when those Infidels declare in Words, what before they sufficiently signified by their *practice*. *They go out from us, because they were never of us*, 1 John 2. 19. They do not change their Religion, for they had never any before which they might exchange.

This, Sirs, in serious truth, is, the condition of those that wilfully refuse and neglect the Duty of *Holy Communion*: And methinks it should make such tremble to consider, that they live in a *profess'd* and *impudent* contempt of God. You pity *Heathens* and ignorant *Americans*; but there is work enough for your pity at home, and their Condition certainly is not worse than the Condition of those careless negligent Sinners among our selves. Yea, the Apostle tells us, *That 'tis better never to have known the way of truth, than after we have known it to turn away from the Holy Commandment*, 2 Pet. 2. 21 And our Saviour saith, *It shall be more tolerable for the dark Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for the enlightened* Capern-

60 An Earnest Invitation

Capernaum and Bethsaida, *Matt. II. 22.* We think their condition dreadful that say, *there is no God*, and no doubt it is *so*: And certainly *their* state is not *less* deplorable, that acknowledge *there is a God*, but *defy* him, and carry the matter *so*, as if in *good Earnest*, there were *no such Being*. To live at large without the serious profession of *some Religion* is *brutish* and *unnatural*: And such *Savages* deserve not to continue in the Societies of Men, but are fitter to range among the wilde Beasts of the Woods: *Such* are those among us, that never make any solemn Profession of any Religion, by any *Act* of their own: They have no *Religion*, but that of their *Climate*, which they neither understand nor mind: They are *Christians* by the *Christianity* of others (*viz.* the *general Profession* of *their Country*) or they are none at all; and if they live and die in this condition, *wilde Men*, and *Cannibals* will at the last be in a *better state* than they.

And now, *Sirs*, *Reasons* for this *carelessness* and *dangerous neglect*, I am sure
you

to the Lord's Supper. 61

you have none ; nor do the sort I am now dealing with, pretend *Scruples of Conscience* : But some *Excuses* there are, (which you know are but *vain*) that you use upon occasion, to take off the edge of reproof, and to seem justified in the sight of Men.

Thus they that were invited to the Supper in the Parable, Luke 14. 18. made *Excuses* ; one had *bought Ground*, and he must see it ; a second had *bought Oxen*, and he must *try them* ; and a third had *married a Wife*, and could not come. None of these *pretences* had any good reason in them ; they had *something to say*, and had a little colour, but they were not the *Causes* of their not coming to the Supper : No, the *true ground* was their *contempt* of the Master, and his *Invitation* : And therefore Matth. 22.3. 'Tis said, *They would not come* ; their *excuses* were looked upon as *flat denials*, and the Reason is given after : It was not their *Ground*, nor their *Oxen*, nor their *Marriage* ; but their *dis-esteem* of the Lord, and his Feast, *They made light of it*, verse. 5.
But

62 An Earnest Invitation

But though these Excuses were not good, yet they had something *specious* in them. 'Twas *business*, and *considerable* occasions that were alledg'd: And *such* Affairs they *really* had; for 'tis said in *St. Matthew*, that *they went their way, one to his Farm; and another to his Merchandize*; so that there was *something true* in their *Pleas*, though the *main thing* for which they were brought, was *false*. But now if they had sent word, that the *Lord's House* was so far off, that they were not able to go to it, tho' really it were within some few Furlongs of their remotest dwellings, and no farther than the *Market*, which they constantly frequented, there had been more *folly* in this Excuse. If they had said, that there was not room for them all in the *Lord's House*, when they knew, that it was never full on such occasions, and that a great part of those that were invited would not come, so that they were sure to find too many empty places, the Excuse would have been interpreted as a *Mockery*, and a *scoff* at the invitation. If they had told the Messengers, that they

to the Lord's Supper. 63

they would not come, except they had each of them a *Chair and Cushion*, provided for him, and might sit in *state* and *easy* at the Entertainment, this had been *greater* arrogance than appears in those Refusers. If they had sent the Lord word, that they would not feast with him at *such* or *such* of his Houses, that were appointed, and were most *convenient* for their Reception; but they would have it here or there; at home, and next door, in places much less fit. *This* would have been a very *humourfome* and very *rude* Answer to the Invitation. If further they had said, that the Feast began too soon, and that they could not *rise so early*, though the Sun was up many Hours before, and they were abroad *every day earlier*, about their other *Business*; this also had been an *affront* to the Master and a *contempt* of his *kindness*. But if these *surly unworthy* people should have been humour'd in all *Particulars*, and things should have been so managed, as to have avoided all these *pretences*: And yet if after such *Condescensions* they should

64 An Earnest Invitation.

should have refused, they had *confuted themselves*, and given the *Lye* to their *Excuses*. But, if notwithstanding all this, they should have cryed out that they were *perishing for want of Bread*, and clamoured and complain'd heavily, that Provision was not made for them : What could have been said to such an *impudent brazen'd* sort of *Hypocrites* ?

Sirs, There are some among you that understand what I mean : I speak not thus out of *ill will* to upbraid any of you, but I ought to mind you, and to endeavour to *convince* you of your Sins. Whatever colours the *guilty* may set upon their neglects and contempts of Holy Ordinances before Men, God will not be deceived or mocked ; there is no putting Tricks upon him. If you will not be perswaded to your Duty, he knows the *reason*, and 'tis in vain to make false *flourishes* and *excuses*. Yea, some Mens *pretences* are so openly untrue and gross, that they cannot as much as hope to *deceive Men* by them. Every one sees the *falsehood* and *lying*

to the Lord's Supper. 65

of their *Allegations*, all their *Actions* proclaim that they do not themselves *believe* or *mean* any thing that they say, and yet they have the *prodigious* *impudence* to lye on in the *face* of God, and *Conscience*, and *Men*. So *seared* and *hardned* are some in their *perverseness* and *hypocrisy*, and act at that *rate*, as if it were a *Play-game*, and *Sport* of *Wit* to shew how many ways they had to evade their *Duty*, with some shew of *Reason*. Sirs, when this *wile* sort of *evil Men* have the *Forehead* to *pretend* *Religion*, they become the most *mischievous* *Miscreants* upon *Earth*; and the fittest *Instruments* that *Satan* can desire or use for the *Affairs* of his *Kingdom*. But no more of them now.

Friends, I am exceeding troubled to see how *undutiful* to *God*, and how *unkind* to themselves, how *foolish* and *unreasonable* many *Men* are, when they seek for *little occasions* to pretend, as *reasons* against the *greatest* and most *important Duties*; when that which would excuse *nothing else*, shall excuse *them* unto *God* for a neglect of his *Worship*,

66 An Earnest Invitation

Worship, in the greatest Instances of it, an *aching Finger*, a few *Drops of Rain*, the *cold Air*, a *Fit of Drowsiness*, an *impertinent Visit*, or such like *Trifles*, are enough to be pleaded for *absence* from the House of God, and Holy Communion with him. My Wife was not at home, or she was busy, my Child's head ached, or I had Friends to dine with me, therefore *I could not be at the Sacrament*. Therefore *I could not*. For shame, false man! offer such *excuses* to thy *Master*, or *Prince*, when he commands and expects thine attendance; see how he will take them from thee: Yea, offer such but to thine *Equal*, that waits for thee on Affairs of Moment, and try how kindly he will receive the Disappointment on such grounds. Dost thou use to say, *I could not go out to Market to buy Necessaries*, because 'twas cold Weather; *I could not go to Dinner to my kind Neighbour next door*, that invited me, because *I had prick'd my Finger*? Are such pretences too *trifling* to be used on such ordinary occasions, and are they enough for the

to the Lord's Supper. 67

the *Greatest*? Will they serve to excuse thy neglect of *feeding* thy Soul with the *bread of Life*, and thy making *Provision* for *Eternity*? Will they answer for thy not waiting on the Lord, the Lord of Life and Glory, when he invited thee to the Feast of Love at the House of Banquets? What thoughts hast thou of the *Privileges* of the Gospel, the *Communion* of *Saints*, the peace of *Conscience*, the *joys of the Holy Ghost*, the *fore-tastes of Glory*; what I say, dost thou think of these, if they have not so much *Power* with thee as the most acknowledged trifles? With how much *less* Respect and Devotion dost thou *serve God*, than wicked Men do the *Devil* and their *Lust*? When they invite to *jolly meetings* and *communion* in *debauchery* and *bestial madness*, do the *Blades* use to make such *excuses*? Are they diverted and kept off from their *brutish satisfaction* by such *Nothings*? Certainly they could not so excuse themselves to their *Lusts* and *vile Companions*. And do you pretend to be *Worshippers* of the God of *Heaven*, and *Worshippers* of the
best

68 An Earnest Invitation

best and purest sort, to be *Christians*, and *Expectants* of Eternal Glories as *Rewards* of your *Services* : And do you thus serve your Maker, *now* and *then* when the *humour* takes you, when the *Devil* hath no *business* for you, and you have nothing else to do ; are you not ashamed to confess that *Religion* hath so little Power with you, and that every thing can do more with you, than your *Duty* to God, and the *Interest* of your Souls ? Do you thus work out your *Salvation* ? Do you thus seek a *Kingdom*, an *Heavenly Kingdom*, an *Everlasting Kingdom* ? Is this the work and patience of the Gospel ? Is this running and striving, and fighting, and giving diligence ? Is this cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes ? Is this forsaking all, and following Christ ? If there be any reason, if there be any shame, if there be any Conscience, if there be any sense of God and Religion in you, let not small matters keep you from this your greatest Duty and Concern : Make no more such vain and self condemning *Apologies*. I know not whether

to the Lord's Supper. 69

ther it were not better for you once for all, to say you are no *Christians*, than to insist on such *shameless* pretensions for your Neglects of Christ and his Appointments, I add no more on this Head now ; I pray God you may lay to Heart what I have said.

CH A P. VI.

I Must now discourse with the other sort of *Refusers*, viz.

(2) *Those* that stand off upon the score of *mistakes* of *Conscience*. In applying my self to them, I shall consider the most weighty *Objections* that carry any colour of *Conscience* with them. And though I know many pretend *scruples* of this sort, when in earnest they are not the reasons of their neglects ; yet because they are so to some, I shall take them to account. They are of two sorts.

(1) Such as hinder Men only *sometimes* and in *part*.

(2) Such

70 An Earnest Invitation

(2) Such as wholly obstruct their *Communion*; and are pretended as grounds, why they cannot partake with us at any time.

Of the first kind are these that follow, *viz.*

[*I would not have neglected the Holy Sacrament, but I was not in Charity, such, or such a Person hath abused me and I was at odds with him; so that I durst not come*]

To this I say, That on such an Occasion, thou art *seriously* and *impartially* to consider, whether thy displeasure were *just* or *unjust*, upon the determining of this will depend the state of the Case. If,

(1) Thy displeasure were *just* and thy Neighbour hath done thee *wrong* and *persists* in it without *repentance* or *reparation*, 'tis no *uncharitableness* to be displeased or to think amiss of him. In such a case thy *anger* is no *sin*, so long as it keeps it self within *just bounds*. Be angry, and sin not, saith the Apostle *Ephes. 4. 26*. They may be parted. And what is no *sin* cannot *unfit* us for the

to the Lord's Supper. 71

the *Holy Communion*. For that Ordinance doth not oblige us to be *reconciled* in our Thoughts to wicked and injurious Men, while they *impenitently* continue *such*. It will indeed require us not to *revenge* our selves on them to do them *wrong*, or to desire their *ruin*, or as much as hurt; but not to have *kind* and *good* thoughts of them while they continue *obstinate* in their *sins* and *injustice*: Otherways it were in the power of every wicked Person to *hinder* the good man from the *Sacrament* when he pleased. On such an occasion (I say we may be *innocently angry*, and not only pity the *injurious* man, which many times is but a *proud*, though more *plausible* word, to disguise our anger. And the Person that is but *thus justly* displeased with an offender against God and himself is not indisposed for the *Sacrament* thereby. If this be your Case at any time, you ought not to permit the Injury of another to do you so much *more*, as to keep you from your Attendance on Christ at his *Feast of Love*.

But

72 An Earnest Invitation

But (2) If upon *examination* you have found, that your *anger* and *displeasure* was unjust, then the *sin* and the *wrong* was on your part, and you ought to repent as a *preparation* for the *Sacrament*, which indeed is the properest *Instrument* to advance your further degrees of Penitence. There you will find *considerations* and *helps* for the cooling the heat of your *Passion*, and for the allaying the *boiling* of your rage and *animosity*. I say, if you are convinc'd in your Conscience, that your *wrath* is *undeserved*, you ought to repent, and if you *do so*, you ought to use the *Holy Sacrament* for the *confirmation* and *heightning* of your *Repentance*.

So that the Scruple of not being in *Charity*, cannot justly keep any from the *Sacrament*, but those that know they hate their Brother without *Cause*, and are resolved to persist in that hatred; such as will not be reconciled to one that hath done them wrong, though he repents, and endeavours reparation. And *such*, in effect *renounce* Christ and declare that they

ex
I
fo
di
co
m
us
Tr
pr
is
th
an
an
yo
dis
you
ver
led
it b
oug
men
add
pray
into
not
my
expe

to the Lord's Supper. 73

expect no benefit from his *Merit*, or *Mediation*, for the obtaining *Pardon* for themselves. If this be your Condition, you may well be afraid to come to the Holy Sacrament, and you may as well tremble to pray, *Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that Trespas against us*. For this is directly praying against your selves. I hope it is not thus with any of you that make this Exception.

But your Neighbour you think is an evil Man, hath done you injury, and not *ask'd* you *pardon*, or sought your *amends*, you are therefore much displeased, and feel great Anger in your Mind against him; but yet are very ready to *forgive* upon his acknowledgments and desire of *forgiveness*. If it be after this manner with you, you ought not to *abstain* from the *Sacrament* for this Reason; but rather to address your selves to it, to *provide* and pray that your *just anger* may not grow into *malice* and *rage*; that you may not be provoked to repay your Enemy one Injury for another; but that

D

by

74 An Earnest Invitation

by the due use of those holy Myſteries you may be more inclined to *forgiveness*, when he ſhall be fit for it. This I think is *ſufficient* for that *Doubt*.

(II) *But I have ſo much Buſineſs fallen upon me, that I have not time to prepare my ſelf, and therefore I cannot come.*

In *Answer* to this, I ſhall ſay ſomething that concerns, 1 *Buſineſs*; and ſomething, 2^{dly}. that concerns *Preparation*.

(1) As to *Buſineſs*. Doth your *Buſineſs* afford you time to eat, and drink, and ſleep, and none to fit your Souls for ſpiritual Entertainments and Converſe with God?

(2) Have you any greater, have you any better buſineſs, than to prepare your ſelves to remember the Love of your *dear Lord*, to meet with him, to renew your Covenant with God, and to receive Pledges of his Pardon and his Love? Do you not reckon that this is *Buſineſs*, and the moſt important and neceſſary Buſineſs?

to the Lord's Supper. 75

ness ; and shall the greater Matters give place to the less ?

(3) Is not much of the Business that hinders, needless ? Have you not voluntarily involv'd your self in more affairs than it was necessary you should, or than your State or Station in the World required ? Might not some of it have been put off to some other time ; or might not the time that you spend in *impertinences* be employed in some of that Business ?

Ask your Consciences these questions ; and know that what ever Business you take upon you *more* than is consistent with your Duty to God, and to your Souls, *that Business is your Sin*. But if your *Business* were not *voluntary* but thrown on you by *providence*, the *doing* such *necessary Business* is *God's Work* ; and while you do it in his fear, and with an Eye to his *glory*, you are doing somewhat that is a *preparation* for the Holy Sacrament, or at least *that which* doth not by any means *indispose* you for it. And hence I pass to the Answers that concern,

76 An Earnest Invitation

II. *Preparation.* As to this take these two Things.

(1) There are *Preparations* required to *Prayer* and *Hearing*, as well as to the *Sacrament*? *Meditation* is the Preparation for *Prayer*, and *Prayer* the Preparation for *Hearing*; and I hope that notwithstanding your Business you perform *these* Duties; if *not*, you are to *repent* speedily of your neglect, and to take the *first* Opportunity of the *Sacrament*, there to *confess* your *sin*, to declare your *repentance* and *resolutions* of *amendment*; to beg *Pardon* for what you have *omitted*, and *Grace* to *assist* you in what you *resolve*. But if you have *perform'd* *those* *holy* *services*, then I say,

(2) That *those* *Performances* joyned with *Faith* and *Repentance*, are *Preparations* for the *Holy Communion*. For when we *hear*, and when we *pray*, we do the same thing that we do at the *Sacrament*, tho' *not* with that *solemnity*; we *remember* Christ when we *hear*, and we do the same, and renew our *Covenant* with God, when we *pray* (in

to the Lord's Supper 77

(in which two I have told you the nature of the Ordinance consists) so that these *acts* are *dispositions* and *preparations* for *that* which is the more solemn Performance. A good Life in the discharge of our Duties towards God and Man, is an *habitual* and *constant* preparation for the Sacrament ; and a true Christian is always ready and prepared to remember Christ, and to confirm the Covenant whereby he is a Christian. It is indeed very fit, that we should take some time before we approach the Lord's Table, to call together into our Thoughts the several great Instances of the love of our dear Saviour, which we are to remember there : What *particular sins* we have to confess, and to resolve and covenant against ; what *Graces* we want, and are more especially to implore. These things we should do, but they are not Works that will require much Labour or Time, if we have been constant in the other preparatory Duties of Meditation, Prayer and Hearing ; for they do habituate such Thoughts and Resoluti-

78 An Earnest Invitation

ons to the Souls of good Men. But if thy case be *such* that thou hast been an *evil* Man, and *negligent* of all spiritual Duty ; but art now *sensible* of thy sin, and *desirous* to reform ; *that sense* and *those desires* of amendment (if they are *sincere*, and if thou understandest the *nature* of the *Sacrament*, and God's *Covenant* that is sealed by it) are thy *preparations*. The more *timethou* takest, and the *more Prayers* and *Thoughts* thou imployest with other means, to make the sense of sin *deep*, and the *desires* of Reformation *intense* and *great*, the *more thou art prepared*, and the *better things* are like to succeed with thee. But if thy *preparation* are of a lower, and more imperfect degree (if of the *true kind*) thou oughtest *not therefore* to *abstain* ; God will *pardon* thy *infirmities*, and *accept* of thy *sincerity* and *strengthen* thee *so*, that thou shalt be *better prepared* against *another opportunity*, if thou art not wanting to thyself. But as to this, I may have occasion to speak more under the next Head, *viz.*

(II) To

to the Lord's Supper. 79

(II.) To consider the *Scruples* of *Conscience*, that keep some off wholly from *publick Communion*. They are either of such as refrain, because (1) they think themselves *unworthy*, or (2) of those that do it, because they think *others unworthy*, (3) of such as refuse on the Opinion, that the way of *Administration* is *Unworthy*. Most of the considerable and usual *Doubts* will fall under one or other of *these*. I begin with those of the *first* sort.

(1) We would come to the Holy Communion, but alas we are not *worthy* of so great an Honour and Privilege; and we are afraid to come, because we hear, that *he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own Damnation*.

To *this*, proposed thus in the general, I answer, (1) We are also *unworthy* of *common Mercies* of *Meat*, and *Drink*, and *Raiment*; and of the more usual *spiritual Mercies*, that God should *speak* unto us, or that we should be permitted to *speak* unto *him*; shall we therefore *starve* our selves, and go

80 An Earnest Invitation

naked ? Shall we therefore refuse to hear and pray ? In the *Sacrament* there is *something of Duty*, and *something of Privilege* ; when we are commanded to do a *Duty reasonable and just*, shall we refuse because we are *unworthy* ? When we are invited unto a *Benefit great and free and necessary*, shall we resist it because we are not *worthy* ? To do this, is to render our selves *more undeserving*, when God offers Favours we *may and ought* to accept, tho' we are *unworthy* of them.

(2) All Men are *unworthy* in the Sense of the Law. *Every Man in his best Estate is altogether Vanity*, Psalm. 39. 5. *We are all an unclean Thing, and our righteousness is as filthy Rags*, Isa. 64. 6. The Meaning is, all Men are Sinners, and their best Services are imperfect and polluted. There is none *righteous*, no not one, according to the Strictness and Severity of the Law, which requires unfinning Obedience. This *Unworthiness* then is not a Reason why thou shouldst refrain ; yea,

(3) If

to the Lord's Supper. 81

(3) If thou art *sensible* of this thine *Unworthiness*, and desirous to be made *more worthy*, thou oughtest for that *Reason* to come. 'Tis *such* that Christ invites: Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matth. 11.28. He came not to call the righteous, but Sinners to Repentance, Mat. 9.19. Ho! every Man that thirsteth come, Isa. 55. 1. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, Rev. 22. 17. Sense of spiritual Wants, and Desire of spiritual Supplies, is part of Gospel Worthiness; and that which gives a Right to the Sacrament. Thy being an *unworthy Sinner*, is not a Reason why thou shouldst refrain, except thou art obstinately resolv'd to continue so. The Beggar is never the more *unworthy* of an *Alms*, because he is in Rags and great Misery; nor the sick Man the more *unworthy* of the Care and Pains of a Physician, because his Disease is great and violent upon him. If indeed the Beggar loves and chuses Want, and scorns Charity; if the Patient hates and resists the Physician and his Applications,

82 An Earnest Invitation

in such a case the one is unworthy of *relief*, and the other of the *means* of *health*. If this be thy case in *Spirituals*; thou art *unworthy*; and till thou art of another temper, I would not persuade thy coming. But if on the other hand, thou art *sensible* of thy *sins*, and *desirous* of *pardon* and *grace* to reform, thou hath the *qualification* that renders thee one that *may* and *ought* to *come*: And thou art *worthy* as a *Beggar* is of an *Alms*, or the *Sick* of *Physick*: That is, thou wantest it, and *Christ* invites thee to come, and to receive *supplies* suitable to thy wants. So that if it be *thus* with thee, the Sentence of the *Apostle* pronounced on him that *eats and drinks unworthily* will not concern thee,

But the *Doubter* presseth the matter more particularly, *Knowledge, Faith* and *Repentance*, are *necessary* to this *worthiness*, [*But I have no knowledge, I cannot believe, I cannot repent; and therefore am not worthy*]

I shall speak to these *distinctly* and *apart*.

to the Lord's Supper. 83

As to what concerns, (1) *Knowledge*, I propose these things.

(1) Perhaps thou art mistaken in the *Degrees of Knowledge* that are necessary. It is not necessary thou shouldst have knowledge in *deep and controversial Points*; no, nor yet in many *doctrinal Opinions* about *Religion*, that are *less speculative and nice*: It is not necessary that thou shouldst be acquainted with the *disputed Matters* about the Sacrament, or be able to discourse largely upon the Subject. No, *Necessary knowledge is in few things, and those practical*. If therefore thou art instructed in the main *plain Points of Christian Doctrine*, and in the great *Rules of Christian Life*; if thou understandest the Sacrament to be a *Remembrance of Christ*, and a *confirming our Covenant with God*; and knowest those *easy things* I have before set down about it: There is no reason then why thou shouldst plead *ignorance* in barr to thy *Duty and Privilege*.

But

84 An Earnest Invitation

But,

(2) If thou art *really ignorant*, in those plain Things, thy Ignorance is inexcusable ; 'tis a great Sin, and an Argument of *prodigious Carelessness and Neglect*: For no one can *want Capacity* to know Things so *easy*, and no one can want Opportunity to know Things so *common*, and no one can plead Excuse for not endeavouring to know Things so *necessary*. If *this* then be thy Case, repent of thy Stupidity and Carelessness that occasioned thy Ignorance, and apply thy self presently to thy *Spiritual Guide*, or some honest knowing Neighbour, to instruct thee in those great and necessary Matters. Be afraid and ashamed to live a Day longer in such dangerous Darkness amidst so much clear Light : And 'till thou hast got out of this State of wilful Blindness, meddle not with Holy Mysteries. But this, I hope, is the Condition but of very few of you: Those that make the Objection, are mostly such as do it upon the *former* Mistake,

to the Lord's Supper. 85

Mistake, which I have endeavoured to rectify.

(II.) Want of *Faith* is pleaded. And to this Scruple I say.

(1) Perhaps thou art *out*, and hast been *mis-taught* in the Doctrine of *Faith*. It may be thou taketh *Faith* to be an *Assurance* of Salvation; or supposest that it requires thy Assent to *many* Principles, and *such* as are *unreasonable* or *doubtful*; or perhaps thy Mind hath been *confounded* by *Phrases*, and *various*, *metaphorical*, and *dark* Representations of Faith, so that thou dost not so much as know *what it is*, or *wherein it consists*. These all have been, and often are the Cases of many well-disposed Christians. The good Man is not absolutely *assured* of his salvation; or he doubts sometimes of many *Doctrines* and *Opinions* that he hath been taught to believe as *Fundamentals*; or his Understanding is *confus'd* by Variety of *odd Notions*, and therefore he thinks he hath not *Faith*, and dares not approach the *Holy Table*. If any of these be thy Condition, rectify thy thoughts,

86 An Earnest Invitation.

thoughts, and thou wilt be rid of thy vain fears: Consider the matter *freely*; look on it in the light of *Scripture* and *Reason*, and thou wilt find, that *those conceits about Faith* were *groundless*. Lay this down for certain, that *the plainest and most obvious account of it is truest*; for God would not make *that* the great Condition of the Gospel, which is *difficult* to understand.

Now the *plain, spiritual, rational* Notion is *this*, *Faith in the general* is the *belief* of a *Proposition affirmed*; *Divine Faith*, the belief of something upon a *Divine Testimony*; *Gospel saving Faith* is such a *belief of Divine Testimony*, as hath influence upon the *heart* and *practice*, and confirms them unto it. If now we believe other *Testimonies*, put not *that* which God hath given us *by*, and of his *Son*, our *Faith* is *meerly humane*, and we have nothing to do with the *Holy Sacrament*. If we *believe* the *Revelations of God* in the *Gospel*, but *that belief* hath not yet had such *power* upon our *affections* and *conversations* as it ought, and as we
desire;

to the Lord's Supper. 87

desire: In *this* case we may, and 'tis our duty to come to the Lord's Table, to profess *that degree of Faith* which we have, and to pray for *more*; that it may be made so *strong and lively*, as to *transform* our heart, and all our powers into the *likeness* of it, and into *his likeness* who is the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*. And finally, if our *Faith* hath already had this effect upon us, we are to come to the *Sacrament* for further *confirmation* of it. This is the short and plain Account of the Matter, and if I should run it out into further *Discourse*, this part would be disproportioned to the rest. If my brevity leave any of you unsatisfied in this, or any other things belonging to my Subject, I am at hand, willing and ready to give you further Satisfaction. But.

(2) It may be the *weakness and imperfection* of thy Faith makes thee think thou hast *none*. In this Case ask thy self the question: Do I think that *Christ Jesus* was an *impostor*, and that the *Gospel* is a *Fable*? Thou
start-

startless and *abhorrest* these Thoughts : Hence thou mayst be assur'd that thou hast *some Degree of Faith* ; but *that*, it may be, is very small and low : Be *that* the Case ; ask thy self then again, Whether thou hast any *Desire* that thy *weak Faith* should be *strengthened*, and thy imperfect Faith should be *improved* to greater and nobler Measures ? If thou art a Person fit to be dealt with under his Head of *Conscience*, it is *thus* with thee ; Thou art *sorry* for *this Imperfection*, and *desirous* of *Growth* and *Improvement* : And if *so*, apply thy self to the *Holy Sacrament*, as to the *proper Means* of *Growth*, and *Remedy* of thy *Imperfection*. Here thy Faith will be *exercised*, and by Exercise it will be felt ; so that thy Doubts will be cleared : Experience will assure thee. And how thy Faith will by the Use of this Ordinance, be quickned and advanced, I have shewn already. Thus to the Objection from the supposed Want of Faith. But,

(III) The

to the Lord's Supper. 89

(III) The good Man thinks that he wants Experience too: He cannot *repent* he saith, and therefore is not worthy. In answer, I take Notice, That,

In Repentance Two things are considerable, *viz.* 1. *Sorrow* for Sin, and, 2. *Turning* from it to a Life of Holiness and Virtue.

1. It may be thy *Sorrow* is not so *intense* and *great* as thou thinkest it fit and suitable to such an Occasion: Thou canst not weep and grieve *so much* for thy Sin as the Evils of it require; and yet thou mayst not wholly want the Grace of Repentance. *All*, indeed, are *Sinners*, and all must *repent*: But Men are Sinners in *indifferent* Measures and Degrees of Guilt; and their Sorrow and Humiliations will likewise be *different*. *Deeper* Convictions and *greater* Agonies and Pangs of Sorrow may be expected from them whose Sins have been *capital* and *notorious*, than from those others whose Lives have been more *civil*, and less tainted with *ranting* Enormities,

90 An Earnest Invitation

Enormities. In may be then thy Education hath been sober, and thy Inclinations not bent towards the grosser Vices ; thou hast not committed any *horrid Crimes*, or such Sins as look *ghastly* in thy Conscience ; and consequently thy Conversion hath not those *terrors*, and that *dread* in it, those melting Sorrows, and violent expressions of Grief that thou observest in some others. Though it be *thus*, thou hast no reason to be discouraged, if thy Sorrow be *so* much as to engage thee to humble thy self before God, sincerely to beg *grace* and *forgiveness*, and to obtain from thee *hatred* of thy Sins, and Resolutions against them ; that *sorrow* of thine is *Godly sorrow*, and part of true *repentance* though it have not the greatest *degrees* of *vehemence* : These may be wanting on another account also in them that are truly Penitent ; their *temper* may be more *cold*. and their *passions* calmer than others are ; and on this score their *resentments* less notable, and the Expressions of them less eager :

to the Lord's Supper. 91

eager : So that *violence* in sorrow are not always arguments of true *repentance* ; Nor the absence of them a sign of *impenitency* and *hardness*. If thou art so sensible of sin as to desire and endeavour to overcome and forsake it, thou art a Penitent in part, and thou oughtest to come to the Sacrament for the strengthening of that sense, and to gain more Assistance and more Resolution to subdue thy Sin. And if there be any real *defect* in thy sorrow, repair thither, that it may be awakened; and excited to degrees more *becoming*, and *effective*.

But (2) The Objection presseth as to the other part of *Repentance*, *I cannot leave my Sin*, and therefore dare not approach the *Holy Mysteries* : But dost thou *desire* it ? Dost thou *endeavour* it ? If so, though thy desires are imperfect, and thy endeavours weak, yet it is thy Duty to present thy self at the *Holy Table*. There thou mayst expect to have thy *Desires* increas'd, and thy *Endeavours* heightned and encouraged. And how both the former
act

92 An Earnest Invitation

Act of Repentance, which is *Sorrow*, and *this* of *Aversation*, are promoted by the *Sacrament*, I have particularly shewn in the former Periods, to which I refer you for your fuller Answer to this, and such like Objections.

Thus of the Scruples that arise from the first Head, the Apprehension of our own *Unworthiness*. I descend to another.

(II) Some abstain from the *Sacrament* because of the *Unworthiness* of *Others*; *wicked Men* are admitted, and they will not have *Communion* with *such*. Yea, they are commanded to have no *Fellowship* with them, *Eph. 5. 11.* and *to come out from among them, 2 Cor. 6. 17.*

For the answering this, I propose these Things to be consider'd :

(1) Hast thou taken the *Method* of our *Saviour*, *Matth. 18. 15.* with the *Sinner* from whose *Communion* thou thinkest thou must withdraw? Hast thou *privately* told him of his *Faults*? Hast thou admonish'd him before *Witnesses*? Hast thou told the *Church*? If so, thou
hast

to the Lord's Supper. 93

hast done, and he persists still in his Wickedness, he will no doubt be *legally* excluded from *Christian Communion*; and so the foundation of thy doubt will be taken off.

(2) How art thou *sure* when thou seest those thou callest *wicked* come to the *Sacrament*, that they do not *repent* of their wickedness, and come to the holy Ordinance to beg *Pardon* for their sins, and *strength* against them? How dost thou know that they are not come to *bind* themselves by deep resolutions and sacred vows, to a *spiritual warfare*, and a new *obedience*? Their coming makes *Profession* of such *designs* and *resolutions*, and how dost thou know that *that Profession* is *insincere*? Hast thou a way of prying into the Heart.

But the Man returns to his sins as soon as he hath done, and hence thou wilt say, thou knowest his *Hypocrisy*. This indeed were something, if it could be certainly *foreseen*; but how he will demean himself after the *Sacrament*, thou canst not *foretell*; This may have

94 An Earnest Invitation

have more effect upon him than *former Sacraments* have had. This I say, may be, and *Charity thinketh no evil, but believeth all things, hopeth all things,* 1 Cor. 13. Or, if it now again prove otherwise, it is no certain Evidence that the Man only made *pretence* and shew; he might then *mean* and *design* *truely* and *well*; but temptations and his *lusts* were *too strong* for him, and carried him away against all his endeavours and resolutions.

(3) Thou performest other sacred Duties, in which thou *remembrest Christ*, and hath *Communion* with God, in the *Company of evil Men*. Thou joynest in *hearing*, and publick *Prayers* with *such*: And why mayest thou not be *present* at the *Sacrament* with them?

If it be pretended as a *reason of difference*, That hearing the Word, and Prayer, are *converting Ordinances*, but the *Sacrament* is not so: I ask thee then, whether thou meanest by [*converting*] a *turning Men from open Infidelity* to the *Profession of the Christi-*

an

to the Lord's Supper. 95

an Faith, and the owning of *Christian Virtues*? or only the *turning* those that *profess* this *Faith* and *Religion* before, to the *practice* of them? If thou intendest the former the *Sacrament* indeed is no *converting* Ordinance; nor are the *Word* and *Prayer* ordinarily used for *such* purposes among us, where the Gospel is already generally profess'd: And thou dost not bear the Company of the Wicked, of which we speak in the *Places* of publick Worship, upon any *such* expectation.

But if by *Converting* Ordinance, thou meanest (as is most likely) such a one as God useth as a *means* to cause Men professing the Name of Christ to *depart from iniquity*, to turn from *sin* to *holiness*, and from the *power of Satan* unto God; I see no reason why any should think or say, that the *Sacrament* is no *converting* Ordinance.

If it be not, either 'tis because the *Sacrament* is no *proper means*; or because God *will not concur* by his *Grace* with it. *Neither of these* can be said with
any

96 An Earnest Invitation

any shew of reason: Not the *former*; For why should not the *solemn remembrance* of *Christ*, and the *consideration* of what he hath *done* and *suffered* be a *means* for the killing of *Sin*, which he came to *destroy*, and the promoting *holiness*, which he *lived* and *died* to advance? Yea, what can be supposed more *likely* and *powerful* for the promoting of that blessed Purpose? Why should not the *sign* and *seal* of God's gracious *Covenant* to give *Pardon* and eternal *Glory* to all that forsake their *Sins*, and live an *Holy Life*, be a fit Instrument to provoke those that understand it, to renounce their *Sins*, and to devote themselves unto *Holiness*? Why should not that *solemn, sacred Engagement*, that all that know what they do lay on themselves at the *Sacrament*, to endeavour to *depart* from every *known evil*, and to *practise* every *known duty*, be a means to oblige them to it? Certainly there is nothing that in the *nature of the thing*, seems to be a more *likely instrument* to convert Men from a *life of Sin*, to a *life of Holiness*; than

to the Lord's Supper. 97

than the sacred remembrance of our Lord at his Table. So that if this Ordinance be not *converting*, it must be because God will not concur by his *Grace* in it; but whoever saith *that*, speaks what he *cannot know*, and *cannot prove*; he talks *without Book*, and *against* it; and is so extravagant in his Assertion, that it would be folly to attempt the confuting of him.

This I have said on this occasion, not to engage in a *Controversy*, but to clear a *Matter of Christian Practice*.

And the very root of this Objection lies in this conceit, That the *Sacrament is not a converting Ordinance*; for which there is *nothing* but *Fancy*, and the bare *Saying* of some *mistaken Men*. But now, if as I have proved, the *Sacrament* may be, and is an *Instrument to Conversion*, then, why should any refrain, because evil Men are admitted to it?

(4) If wicked Men come to the *Sacrament* that are not *prepared* for it, their *unpreparedness* is *their sin*, and they shall answer for it: But we ought not

E

there-

98 An Earnest Invitation

therefore to neglect our *Duty*, because *they* have omitted *theirs*. We may, and we ought to advise, and admonish them to prepare themselves for the Ordinance before they come to it: If they will not follow our brotherly admonition, we cannot help it; we have done what we can to render them more worthy, and their sin shall not be laid to our charge. To prepare *our selves* for the *Holy Communion*, and to address our selves unto it, *is that* which we are sure concerns us; if we neglect, 'tis our *sin*, and other Mens Sins will not excuse us. *Their sinning in one kind* should be no reason why we should *sin* in another. There is no reason that we should starve our selves, because others take the Bread that belongs not to them.

(5) If we are *worthy* Communicants, and others receive *unworthily*, *They have no Communion with us*, nor we with them: *They only eat Bread and drink Wine*; but we partake of the *mystical Body and Blood* of our Lord. *Our Communion is with the Father*, and
with

to the Lord's Supper. 99

with his Son *Jesus Christ*, and with the faithful, worthy *Receivers* ; but the Unworthy *partake* neither with *us* nor *them*. If an *Ape* leap upon the Table and eat of the Bread where Friends are met at an Entertainment, is he therefore a Guest ? Is he one of the Company ? If Writings are to be mutually sealed there among the Friends, and that Creature catcheth up the Seal, and doth as the Covenanters do, is he therefore a Party ? He doth the same *Action*, but not with the same *Designs* and *Ends* ; and *these* make the *Communion*. The Case is thus in Reference to those ungodly Men that *intrude* to the Sacrament ; and the pious Communicants have no Reason to think themselves concerned in their Company. Their *Bodies* are *together*, but their *Spirits* act and move *different Ways*. The *Communion* is *spiritual*, and only those that receive as they ought have *Fellowship* with *Christ*, and with one another. And this were enough to answer that Part of the Objection also that is taken from the *Scripture*,

100 An Earnest Invitation

where we are forbid to have *fellowship* with wicked Men. But I add,

(6) When Christians are prohibited wicked *Fellowship*, *Ephes. 5, 11*. It is evident that the prohibition concerns *Heathen Mysteries*, which are there call'd the *unfruitful Works of darkness*, because they were used in close recesses; and *verse 12*. The Apostle saith, *It is a shame to speak of these things that are done of them in secret*. Christians were not to *communicate* with the *Heathens* in their *abominable Mysteries*: No, nor may they partake with wicked Men in any *action of Vice*, nor make them their *bosom Friends*, nor be concerned with them in *other Matters* more than needs; especially if they are *openly prophane*, and *obstinately ungodly*. But it doth not therefore follow, that they must forsake their Lord's Table, and the most solemn Expressions of Duty to him, because evil Men *intrudingly* present themselves unto it.

And

to the Lord's Supper 101

And whereas Christians are commanded to come *out from among them*, and to be *separate*, 2 Cor 6. 17. 'Tis plain, that the Persons they are required to separate from were *Heathens* and *Idolaters*: For they are called *Unbelievers*; vers. 14. *Infidels*, vers. 15: And that they were *Idolaters*, is intimated, vers. 16. *What Agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* Whence it follows, *Wherefore come out from amongst them*. So that this place doth not concern the present Business; Christians were to separate from the Worship of *Heathen Idolaters*, but it doth by no means follow hence that they must forsake the true Christian Worship, because *evil Men* (who yet profess Christ) afford their presence at it.

And this may suffice for Answer to the Objections taken from the *unworthiness* of others that are admitted in *mixt Communion*s.

Lastly,

Lastly, The *Unworthiness* of our *Way of Administration* is pretended by some, as a Reason why they cannot communicate with us. I shall only speak briefly to two Exceptions of this sort.

1. The *Sacrament* is administered amongst us in the *Way of Forms* of *Prayer*, which they think to be contrary to spiritual Worship. And, (2) *kneeling* as it is required, which they suppose to be contrary to the first *Example*; and so an irregular Posture of receiving.

To the *first*, I say these things, (1) Worship and Prayer may be *spiritual*, where *Forms* are used: For the *spirituality* doth not consist in the *invention* of words, but in the due *intention* and *engagement* of the Soul. If we pray in *faith*, with *humility*, *self-resignation*, and *holy desire* of the good things we pray for, we pray in the *spirit*, tho' by a *Form*. And if on the other hand, we express our selves by *conceived Prayers* never so *fluently* and *earnestly*, and have not those dispositions
of

to the Lord's Supper. 103

of Soul upon us when we pray, our Prayers are *formal*, though without a *Form*. Which of these is *fitting* in it self, I shall not dispute, but only say, that *neither* is unlawful, but *both* have their use; and add, that one *sort* may be *properest* at *one time*, and the other *sort* at *another season*; so that 'tis silly *superstition* to be devoted to the opinion of one of them, as absolutely to condemn the other as *unlawful*. In publick *Worship*, *Forms* have the advantage in securing the Gravity and Solemnity of it, and in this too, that the Worshipers know what it is they join in: But in *secret Devotions*, *conceiv'd Prayers* may sometimes suit better with particular occasions, and may engage the Affections more. So that either of these may be used, as shall best accord with the ends of Prayer. And when the publick *Authority* of the Church requires the one, we may not *scruple* it, though we are more *affected* with the *other*, especially, since we may in *private* take the liberty to use which of them we think *fit*.

104 An Earnest Invitation

test. (2) *Those that* are most against *Forms*, pray by them, when they join with another that prays, though he does it never so much *ex tempore*: For the Peoples Minds are not concerned in *inventing* the words they pray by; the Minister gives a *Form* to them. And if you may pray in the *form* of a private person dictated to you suddenly, and without *deliberation*, and which you do not know before, whether it will agree with good sense or sound *Doctrine*; why then may you not do it in the *Forms* of the Church, compos'd by wise and reverend Persons upon mature *Considerations* and *Advice*; especially when they are such as we do, or may know before to be pious and grave, suitable to Christian *Necessities*, and Christian *Truths*? There is no good Reason that I know to make a Scruple of the *latter*, if we admit the *former*.

(11) *Kneeling* at the *Sacrament* is not agreeable to the *first Example*; our Saviour administer'd to his Disciples *sitting*; and perhaps you fear there

to the Lord's Supper. 105

there is something of *Poper*y in the posture of *Kneeling*,

I answer (1) we are not bound to a nice and punctual observance of all the *Circumstances* that were in the *Primitive Example*: The Sacrament was first administer'd in the *Evening* in an *upper Room*, *only* to *Twelve Persons* and *those Men*, and *Ecclesiasticks*, or at least such as were *destined* to be so: But even the Objectors do not think we are obliged to act in the Sacrament strictly after the Example of the Particulars: And why should we suppose our selves to be tyed in the matter of *posture*, more than in those *other Circumstances* which we acknowledge to be of no binding nature? (2) The *posture* of those times at Meals was not *fitting*, but *leaning*, according to the *then Custom* of the *Romans*. So we read, *John 21. 20.* That the beloved Disciple *leaned on his Master's Breast at Supper*. And tho' the *English Translation* renders *Luke 22. 14.* *He sat down*, and the Disciples with him; it is in conformity to our *phrase*

106 An Earnest Invitation

and *custom*, which is *sitting*; for the word in the Original [*ἀνέκκλιτο*] doth not imply *that posture*, but is applicable to any other that is used, as well as *sitting*. So that if we are *strictly* tyed to the original *posture*, we must *lean* at the Sacrament, and neither *sit* nor *kneel*. But (3) the Institution hath not bound us to either the one or the other, but left the Matter to be determined by the general *Rules* of *Decency* and *Reverence*. And since the *Fathers* or the *Church* have commanded *kneeling*, as the posture most expressive of our *Humility* and *Reverence* in receiving the Pledges of Divine Love, I see no reason why any should boggle at it; much less why they should refuse their Duty, and their *Privilege*, abstain from their spiritual Food, and the solemn Remembrance of their dear Lord, rather than do a thing so *innocent*, so *decent*, and so *reverent*, which the Authority of the Church requires from them. He hath but little appetite to his Meat, that will not eat it

to the Lord's Supper. 107

it except he may do it in such a fashion as is agreeable to his own humour.

Ay, but the Objector doubts, that there is real danger, and something of *Popery* in the case; the *Papists* use *kneeling* to signify their *adoration* of the *Host*, and the *Scrupler* fears there may be some such thing in our practice. But this fear is very *uncharitable* and *groundless*, since our *Church* doth so *vehemently* and *constantly* declare against the *Transubstantiation* of the *Romanists*, and the *Adoration* of any *Creature*; and since we are always told, that *kneeling* is required for no other *Reason* than to *signify* our *Humility* and *Reverence*: And though the *Papists* do express more by that *Posture*, yet since our *Church* declares, that *this is all* she intends in reverence to the *consecrated Elements*, there is no ground why any should think *more* is meant by it. *Kneeling* signifies *Reverence* as well as *Worship*; and the *declaration* of the *Person* himself is enough to shew
which

108 An Earnest Invitation

which of them he intends. But because, though the *Papists* adore the *Bread* as the real *Body* of *Christ*, and therefore *kneel* before it, yet *that* can be no reason why we should *not* in this remembrance of our *Lord* adore *himself*: They kneel to him as present *corporally*; we worship him as *virtually* and *spiritually* present.

This I might urge further as a positive Argument for the *posture* of *kneeling*, over and above the use of it, as an Answer to the Objection. Thus, all acknowledge that *Christ* is to be worshipped: *Receiving* the *Sacrament* is the *proper Worship* of *Christ*; and *kneeling* is a *proper* signification of *adoration*. It follows that on this account *kneeling* is *fit*, and *fittest* to be used in the action of Communion. But I shall pursue this matter no further, what I have said may satisfy the *modest* and *reasonable*; and people that are set and resolv'd in their Opinions, will not be satisfied with never so much more.

I should

to the Lord's Supper. 109

I should now draw to an end, but I am loth to leave you without some particular *Rules of Preparation*; These I shall lay down plainly and briefly in the ensuing Periods

CHAP. VII.

THE Persons that are come to the Sacrament may be distinguished into two sorts, *viz.* Either *such* as do *repent* and are *sorry* for their *Sins*, but have not yet in any good degree *prevail'd* over them; or, those *other* more *improv'd* and *grown* Christians, who in considerable measure have master'd their Sins, and are endowed with many habits of Holiness and Virtue, The first sort are yet under the *Law*, *viz.* A state of *sense* and *conviction* of Sin, but have nor attained to the glorious *Liberty* of the *Sons of God*, or the state of power over them. But the others have

110 An Earnest Invitation.

have arrived to that Power in Competent Measure, so that *sin* doth not reign in their *mortal Bodies*, because they are not under *the Law*, but *under Grace*. For Distinction sake, I call the first sort, *Bare Penitents*; the second, the *Faithful*. Now the *Preparations* that concern *these* are different, as their States are.

I. For the *Bare Penitents*, and *Sorrowers* for Sin, I advise them to *prepare* by the *Rules* following.

(1) Endeavour to make your selves as *sensible* as you can of the *evil* of *sin*; Consider it is an *enemy* unto God, and to your own Happiness; as the *basest ingratitude*, and the greatest *deformity*; as a thing to be *hated* for *it self*, if there were no Consideration had to its *effects*: Look upon it as the *destroyer* of your *present*, as well as *future* Peace and Felicity; as the *enslaver* of your Souls to the *Devil*, and that which *debaseth* them to the *Likeness* and *Condition* of Beasts
Aggra

to the Lord's Supper. III

Aggravate such Considerations in your thoughts by all the Circumstances that may render sin odious to you.

(2) Consider the *gracious* Nature of the *Covenant* that God hath made with us in his Son; that by that *Covenant* he hath assured all true *Penitents* of *Pardon* of their Sins, and *strength* against them. So that be our Sins never so *many*, or so *heinous*, they will be *forgiven*, if we *repent* and turn from them; and be they never so *strong* and *violent* upon us, they may be overcome, if we accept and use the Grace that the *Covenant* offers to us. Represent these things duly, and frequently to your Thoughts, and for the making the deeper impressions on them, collect those places of Scripture that speak so fully of the *Love* and *Mercies* of God, his readiness to *Pardon*, and *desires* of our *happiness*, the *frequent* and *free offers* of his kindness; his *invitations* to Sinners to
come.

112 An Earnest Invitation

come unto him, and his often *bewailings* of their *obstinacy* and *hardness* in running from him : Consider that he sent his Son into the World to seek and to save *them that were lost*, to bring *Sinners to Repentance*, to take away the *Sins of the World*, to deliver us from the *Wrath to come*, and that the *World through him might be saved* ; I say, draw together *such Passages*, dwell upon them in thy *Meditations* till thou hast *fill'd* thy Soul with them. And then thou wilt find great encouragement to seek for Pardon, and wilt be supported against those faintings and despondences, that the meer sense of Sin, without a Saviour, might occasion in thy Soul.

(3) After this summon up all thy Resolutions against thy Sins ; Consider thy *Baptismal Engagements*, how *just*, and *reasonable*, and *necessary* they were ; Resolve to *confirm* them by *New Vows*. Content not thy self with some *cold* and *indefinite* inten-

to the Lord's Supper. 113

intentions of leading a new Life *some* time or *other*, but endeavour to settle in a *firm, unalterable* purpose of *sighting* again Sin, and living unto God. Do all thou canst by *Reason* and *Religion*, by the *Considerations* of *Duty* and of *Interest*, to fix thy Soul *here*. And then,

(4) Be earnest with God in Prayer, to give thee a fuller sight of Sin, and clearer, surer thoughts of *pardon-
ing* Mercy: To present thee with more Arguments to heighten thy Resolutions, and to make thy Soul *more* capable of being moved by them. I say, apply thy self unto God by Prayer, publick, private, and secret Prayer, Confessing thy own vileness, acknowledging his Mercies, and resolving new Obedience. And being thus prepared,

(5) Look on the Holy Sacrament as thy great *Duty* and *Remedy*; as *that* to which God calls thee, and the State and Necessities of thy Soul call thee;

✓ 114 An Earnest Invitation

thee ; As that Ordinance in which thou art to *seek and mayst expect pardon and strength, resolutions and peace.* Consider this, and raise thine *appetite and expectations ; for they that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.*

And now when thou hast exercised thy self *in these Acts*, and the time of the Holy Communion approacheth. Then,

(6) Imploy thy time in *awakening and affectionate Thoughts of Christ thy Lord.* Consider the greatness of his *Condescension*, the *kindness* of his *Undertaking*, the *holiness* of his *Life*, the *purity* of his *Doctrine*, the *heaviness* of his *Suffering*, the power of his *Resurrection* and the *glory* of his *Ascension*. Turn thy Thoughts earnestly, and often, upon these and such Instances of the History of the Holy Jesus, and by them dispose thy self to a benefiting Remembrance of him at his Table.

And

to the Lord's Supper. 115

And, Lastly. Gather up all thy Thoughts and Resolutions together, *viz.* thy apprehensions of the *vileness* of *sin*, of the *Grace* of the *Covenant*, and the *Merits* of thy *Lord*; thy *purposes* of leaving every evil Way, and of renewing thy *baptismal Vows*, and say to thy self, Now is the time come that I must use *these thoughts and resolves*, that I may obtain pardon, and strength, victory over Sin, and Assurance of Happiness: My Lord invites me to the great *representation* of the evil of Sin in his own sufferings; to see his *Body wounded*, and his *Soul made an offering for Sin*, in the *Type of bread broken*, and *Wine poured out*; to remember his *Conquest* over Sin, by *Death*, and a glorious *Resurrection*; To see the *Covenant of Grace* and pardon *sealed*: He invites me to *these Privileges*, and calls upon me to bind my self stronger in this holy Covenant, and thereby to make my self the subject of those blessings it assures and convey. I say, imploy thy

116 An Earnest Invitation

thy Soul in such Thoughts, and bring them with thee to the Lord's Table, spread them before him *there* in humble Confessions, Supplications and Acknowledgments, and thou mayest then expect to receive the Benefit thou art seeking after.

These are Preparations for a bare Penitent, that hath yet made but little Progress in subduing of his Sins : And though the *highest Degrees* of all these are not absolutely necessary to the Coming of such to the Lord's Table ; yet the more they have been exercised in them, so much the better it is, *by so much* they are *more prepared*, and *so much more* they may expect of the Benefits. But if your Minds, that have not been used to *spiritual* things, will not fix long on *such* Thoughts and Meditations, engage them as far as you can ; proceed in the Method prescrib'd with that *diligence and care* that becomes one that is *serious*. And then, tho' your

to the Lord's Supper. 117

your preparations be *imperfect now*, they may be *more compleat* against *another season*. If thou art sensible they have been so *defective*, maintain and keep up that sense, and resolve upon it, to endeavour to fit thy self *better* for *another* Sacrament, by renewing the *same* Method, which will be *easier* for thee in the *progreſs* than it was in the *beginning*.

As for the other sort, *viz.*

II. *Those* that have *advanced* in the conquest of *their Sins* ; they are to *act over all the former Particulars*, that I have advised to the *bare Penitent* : For being yet *sinners* and *imperfect*, they have need to use *that* Method. And there are these few *other Directions* to be briefly added, that do further concern them.

(1) Call your selves to a particular Account concerning your *Sins*, examining *what Vices* you are most *addicted* to, and what are the *sins* of your *Temper*, or of your *Profession*

118 An Earnest Invitation

feſſion and Calling : When you have found *theſe*, exerciſe particular *Acts* of *Repentance* upon them, and renew your *Reſolutions* againſt them. Conſider that Allowance of them is in-*conſiſtent* with *ſincerity*, and a State of true *regeneration* ; that 'tis neceſſary you ſhould oppoſe and ſubdue them, and that the *Holy Sacrament* is to be uſed as a *means* for that bleſſed *end*.

(2) Examine *what ground* you have got upon your *ſins* ſince the *laſt Sacrament*, whether you are now more *tender* and *fearful* of offending God than you were before ; whether your *inclination* to any evil be more *weakened* and *mortified* ? If ſo, take *incouragement* hence to go on with more *Chriſtian vigour* and *reſolution*. If not, *humble* your ſelves for your *unfruitfulneſs*, and endeavour to diſpoſe your *Souls* to make a *better uſe* of the *next opportunity*.

(3) Inquire they

to the Lord's Supper. 119

(3) Inquire into the state of your Souls as to your *Graces*; *what Graces* are wanting, and *what* are *weak*? *which* are *growing*, and which at a *stand*? And when you have found the condition of your Souls as to *these*, then exercise you *meditations* upon *these Particulars* in the *Life, Doctrine,* and *Precepts* of your Lord, whom you are to remember at his Table, that may be proper for *your Case*. Apply your Thoughts, and Cares, and Resolutions that way. *Design* and *Resolve* to attend the Holy Sacrament for the *supply* of those *wants*, and to endeavour to use it *so*, that the *needed Graces* may be obtain'd, and the *weak ones* may be *strengthened*, that *those* that are at a *stay* may be put into *motion* forwards, and *those* that are *growing* may be *further improved*. If you thus provide and imploy your selves in the Method before remembred, you will then be meet Partakers of the *holy Mysteries*, and may assure your selves of the *blessings* and *advantages* which they convey.

This

THIS Subject would have required a larger Discourse, but my *present* Business was principally with the *Careless* and *Negligent*, to whose Condition I have mostly applied myself. For the others, that are solicitous for their Souls, and desirous to be further inform'd about this great and important Affair of *Preparation*, I shall advise them to get, and carefully to read and digest Two Excellent Books of the Sacrament: The former call'd *Mensa Mystica*; or, *A Discourse concerning the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*. By Dr. *Simon Patrick*; and the latter named the *Christian Sacrifice*, containing most Excellent *Meditations* and *Prayers*, both before and after the *Sacrament*.

In the *First Design* of this little Discourse I intended to have added some Things of that sort for your Use; but while I was thinking of it, my Pious, Learned, and Excellent Friend the Author, sent me one of those his last Books, the *Devotion* and

to the Lord's Supper. 121

and *Piety* of which is *extraordinary*; and there is nothing that I know fitter to prepare your *Affections*, and to excite them to the noblest Height of *Desire* and *Love*, than those *Heavenly Meditations*? And you cannot use more proper, judicious, or affectionate *Prayers*, than those he hath annex'd. So that I was exceeding glad when I saw this useful, much needed Work, so incomparably well done, that there was no Occasion of my doing any more in it, than earnestly to recommend that Book to your Perusal. And I intreat you to get it into your Houses, and from Time to Time endeavour to warm your Souls by it, when you are preparing for the *Sacrament*, and by it to fix you in your *Resolutions* of living according to your *Engagements* there, when you have attended on that blessed Ordinance.

And now, my *Friends*, I leave you to the *Blessing* of *God*, and the Consideration of what I have said. Whatever Judgment may be made of it,
R I have

122 **An Earnest Invitation**

I have this Testimony, That I *meant* it
sincerely. And I shall never cease to
pray, that both you and I may sincerely
practise according to it,

Your Faithful Monitor,

and Servant,

J. G.

Postscript.

Postscript.

TO THE Citizens OF BATH.

Christian Friends,

BESIDES the Writing of this Book
for your Use, I have taken what
Care I could, you should have it
in your Hands ; and especially those of
the poorer Sort that cannot buy. I was
extremely satisfied to perceive so good an
Effect

Effects of those Endeavours at the last solemn time of Sacrament. Such Communion have not been here since our unhappy Troubles, that unhing'd all: And now give me leave to ask you:

Did it not comfort your Hearts to see something like the former Days of Charity and Peace? Is it not a blessed sight to behold a full assembly of Christians met with one Accord, to worship Christ their Lord? Is not the Service more solemn, and are not our Hearts more raised? Are not our Devotions kindled by the Zeal of others; and our Spirits refresh'd by going to the House of God in Company? Is it not joyful to see the mutual Amity of Christians express'd there; and to join in full Consent in remembring our dear Lord; jointly vowing our selves to his Service; praising him for his Love, and waiting on him for his Blessings? Is not this more like Religion and Worship, than the discouraging sight of a few scatter'd here and there, when Multitudes turn their Backs upon this Feast of Divine Grace

Grace and Love ? Is not this more comfortable than living in a stupid Neglect of a great known Duty, and better than running into Corners after Fancies and unknown ways ? Is not Religion more honour'd, and Peace more promoted, and Charity and Edification more advanced, by a joynt Worship of our Redeemer, than by Separations and proud Singularities ? Have not our Children and Servants a better Example in such a Practice ? And are they not prepared for Reverence, and a careful Sense of Religion, when they see full Congregations devoutly attending upon the Service of it ? Will not this great Reproach of the Reformation be taken away by our Unanimity in Worship ; and the Scandal of our Coldness and Want of Zeal, that hath turn'd so many to the Church of Rome on the one Hand, and to the Sects on the other, in great part be removed, and our Church better secured in these dangerous Days from those Enemies on both Sides ?

To these things, Sirs, if you consider you must consent, and I beseech you to weigh seriously the Benefits that will accrue to your selves and the publick weal of the Church and Kingdom, by an Accord in Worship. As you have begun in this, I hope you will hold on, and shew that it was not only a Fit of Devotion, or any by-consideration that induced you to it, but a conviction and sense of Duty.

I have represented to you the necessity of perseverance in Religion, and the dangers of Apostacy: They that endure to the end shall be saved, Mark 13. 13. But if any Man draw back, God saith, His Soul hath no pleasure in him. 'Tis a terrible saying that of the Apostle, which I wish you well to consider, It is impossible for those who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, if they shall fall away, to re-
new

new them again to repentance, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.

You have now solemnly confirmed your Baptismal Engagements, and sacredly vowed your selves to Christ as his Servants and Subjects; whatever imperfection there was in those beginnings, take heed you do not account them as nothing: God doth not despise the day of small things, Zach. 4. 20. You are not to be discouraged because you feel not any great effect, at first; the progress of the Grace of God, like the growth of Plants, is often by degrees, insensible: In continuance you will find the benefit, increase of your Graces and of your Comforts: But if you leave off what you have begun, you will grow worse and worse; more hardened in sin, and more averse to spiritual Duties: You will dishonour Religion, and the Holy Sacrament, more by your Apostacy, than ever you did by your former neglects: You will offend and discourage others from trying those ways which you have attempted and left; and woe be to those by whom such Offences come.

But, Sirs, I trust, you having begun in the Spirit, will not thus end in the Flesh. You have solemnly profess'd your Belief in Christ, and Adherence to him; Hatred of your Sins, and Resolutions of new Obedience: And I hope you see no Cause to alter your Minds; If not, in the Name and Fear of God, keep on in your Attendance on that sacred Ordinance: Neglect no Opportunity of meeting your Lord, professing your Love, and receiving Tokens of his. The primitive Christians did at first every Week; and our Frequency in the same Duty may contribute much to the restoring that Divine Spirit of Holiness, and Peace, and Love, that was so eminent among those Blessed Saints and Martyrs of Jesus.

I wish you would afford me Occasion to deliver the Sacrament every Month, (all the Year) as I do it during the Summer-Season, for the sake of those pious Strangers that are willing to use spiritual, as well as natural Means of Health: And I should be very glad to meet more of you at such Times.

Times. It would be no Hindrance to your Affairs; for God and Religion are never out of a Man's way. At his Table we seek and may hope to find his Blessing; and this is necessary to the Concerns of this Life, as well as to those of the next.

And, methinks, every one that hath any Sense of Sin, and Remorse for it, should rejoice there is such a Remedy, and have frequent Recourse to it. We fall into Sin daily, and thereby wound our Consciences, and lay in Matter for Troubles and Fear: This obligeth us to repeated Acts of Repentance, and the more serious and solemn it is, the more effectual it will be, and the more Comfort and Peace will arise from it.

Now in the holy Sacrament we solemnly profess, confirm, and exercise our Repentance, and receive their Assurances of Pardon and Peace with God; so that our own Needs should urge us to frequent Attendance on this sacred Duty, and desire and earnestly to expect the Returns of it.

This, as it would ease those that are oppress'd by the burthen of their sins, so would it be an excellent preservative against it: For nothing tends more to the destruction of our sins, and growth of our Graces, than often to examine our selves, to renew our Resolutions, and to implore the Divine Aid and Help: And to these Exercises the Holy Sacrament engageth us; and therefore this is one of the most effectual Instruments of Reformation, and an Holy Life, that we can use.

Upon the whole, my Christian Friends, let us all repent and be heartily sorry that we have hitherto been so wanting to the great Duty, and to this Spiritual Interest; and resolve through the Grace and Strength of God to express our unfeigned Repentance for our former neglects by our future diligence.

*To assist your Devotion in it, I here annex some particular Prayers, which those that are not better provided, may use as there is need. These I thought
very*

Postscript.

131

very proper to be added, because I fear many perform this Duty in a cold, dead customary manner, for want of some such Help.

And now I pray God to bless these poor Endeavours both to You and Me, and that we may be encouraged and excited by them to constancy in our Duty, and assisted by his Grace concurring with them to perform this solemn Worship with such Sincerity and Devotion, that his Name may be glorified, and our Souls comforted with the Pardon of our Sins and Peace of Conscience here, and at length attain that everlasting Peace and Rest that remains for good Men in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus : To whom, with the Father, and Holy Spirit, be Praise and Adoration henceforth and for ever. Amen.

FORMS

FORMS
OF
PRAYERS
FOR THE
LORD's Supper.

*A PRAYER at Entrance, before the
Holy SACRAMENT is begun.*

MOST Gracious Father, Thou
invitest me, a vile Sinner, un-
worthy of the least Favour,
to a spiritual Banquet, to a
Feast of Love; Lord I am come upon
thy gracious Call; being poor and needy,
weary and heavyladen under the Burthen
of my Sins, I come unto thee, O Lord,
for

134 Forms of Prayers

for relief and rest: Help me to approach these Holy Mysteries with fear and reverence, deep humility, and ardent devotion: With an Heart full of Faith and Love; sensible of thy infinite Goodness in sending thy Son to die for me; and of his inexpressible Love in undertaking and accomplishing the Works of my Redemption, truly sorry for my manifold sins, and thoroughly resolv'd against them; and grant, Holy Father, that hereby my Graces may be strengthened, and my Sins destroyed: That I may serve thee sincerely and acceptably all the Days of this mortal Life, and in thy due time attain thy everlasting Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

*A P R A Y E R while others are
Receiving.*

O Lord, I praise thy Name that thou art pleased to admit me to the Congregation of thy People
to

for the Lord's Supper. 135

to be partaker of the Communion of Saints, and in that to enjoy Holy Fellowship with thy self, and a comfortable Earnest of that glorious, perfect, most happy Communion thou hast given us ground to hope for in thy Kingdom : Grant, gracious Lord, that I may thankfully and joyfully entertain this Privilege, and be disposed by it to Universal Charity and Love unfeigned to these thy People, and to all Christians. And Lord help these thy Guests worthily to receive this present Token of thy Love, and make them and me such in reality and truth as we are here in this solemn Profession, thy obedient and faithful Subjects. Let our Hearts be knit to Thee and to each other, that we may henceforth live in Unity and brotherly Love, forgiving one another, forbearing one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us ; being pitiful and courteous, ready to do good and to communicate ; to distribute to the necessities of those that want, and prepared for every good

good Work: That God's Holy Name may be glorified, our Profession adorned, Christian People edified, and our Souls comforted with the Peace of God, and Peace of Conscience here, and finally rewarded with the full Enjoyment of the Love and Holy Communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord, Thou God of Love, grant that as we thy Servants are here met in a joint and solemn Remembrance of thy Son our Lord, in Obedience to his Commands and Holy Appointment; so all the Members of thy Church may agree in the same common Profession of thy Name, and of thy Son's Religion: performing the great Duties, and participating of the main Ordinances with *one Accord*, in one Heart and one Mind, that our Divisions being cur'd and our Animosities laid aside, the

to the Lord's Supper. 137

the Scandals occasioned by them may be removed, Atheism and Infidelity may be ashamed, all Wickedness, *Spiritual* as well as *Carnal*, may be discountenanced, and true practical Goodness advanced in the World: That Peace and Love, and all the blessed Fruits of them, may abound, and true Religion in the Power of it, may gloriously increase: That the Professors of it may no longer contend about *Mint, Anise, and Cummin*, but heartily and sincerely mind the great Things of the Law; and particularly the Law of Love, that *New Commandment*, that *we should love one another*: That we may return to the primitive blessed Temper of Holiness and Charity, and frequent Communion; that we may shew our Faith by our Works, and our Love by our Obedience; and not spend our Zeal and Strength in disputing, but engage the Vigour of our Affection, and Resolutions in Holy Living, and hereby express our affectionate Remembrance of Christ, and prepare
our

138 **Forms of Prayers**

our selves for that Enjoyment of him,
which we expect through the Merits
and Mediation of that blessed Lord and
Saviour. *Amen.*

*A P R A Y E R when the Minister draws
near with the Elements.*

Blessed be thy Name, O Lord, that
I was born in a Christian Land,
and admitted to thy Church by Bap-
tism, and have lived to a Capacity of
sealing my Baptismal Vows in mine own
Person: Lord, I heartily take those
Engagements upon my self; I renounce
all Sins, the Works of the Devil, and
worldly Vanities and sensual Lusts: I
heartily believe thy Holy Religion, and
sincerely profess constantly to endea-
vour to obey thy Laws, and earnestly
implore the Assistance of thy Grace and
Spirit to enable me to keep these Reso-
lutions; through Jesus Christ my Lord,
Amen.

A P R A Y E R

for the Lord's Supper. 139

*A PRAYER at the Receiving
of the Bread.*

LORD, I receive this broken Bread,
the Representation of thy Body
in Memory of thy wonderful Incarna-
tion, and meritorious Sufferings, and
vow by it, that I will by the Grace of
God persist in the stedfast Faith of thy
most excellent Religion, and sincere
Obedience to thy most Holy Laws, to
my Life's end. *Amen.*

Another.

LORD, *I believe, help my Unbelief.*
I take this Sign of thy Body as
a Token of thy Love, and Seal of thy
Promises, to obtain for me the Pardon
of my sins, and the Salvation of my
Soul, upon the Terms of Faith and new
Obedience: Lord, I stand to my part of
the Covenant, and in full Assurance of
Faith, I rely on thee for the Accom-
plishment of thine: *Be it unto me accor-
ding to thy Word. Amen.*

Another.

Another.

GRant, O Lord, that this Bread of Life, receiv'd by me in stedfast Faith and humble Thankfulness, may refresh and nourish thy Soul, and be an effectual Means of the Growth of my Graces, and Increase of my Comforts, 'till I come to Life Everlasting, through Jesus Christ my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer at the receiving of the Cup.

LORD, I remember with all Humility and Gratitude the Effusion of thy precious Blood for me, and the Atonement made by it: Grant me such a Sense of those Sufferings as may awaken a due Abhorrence of my Sins, and such an Apprehension of that Propitiation, as may encourage my Addresses to the Throne of Mercy for Pardon and Peace; and quicken my Endeavours in the ways of Repentance and Holy Living, 'till I obtain the Blessings thou hast purchased by thy Merits,

for the Lord's Supper. 141

Merits, and practised in thy Gospel.
Amen.

Another.

WHAT manner of Love was this, that while ~~we~~ were Enemies Christ dyed? Lord, make me deeply sensible of this astonishing Goodness; and enable me to express my Thankfulness by a constant and intire Subjection unto Him, who hath bought me with the inestimable Price of his most precious Blood, to whom be Praise and Adoration for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Another.

LORD, wash me from my Sins thro' that Blood which I here commemorate; that being deliver'd from the Terrors of Guilt and Wrath, I may serve thee without fear, in Righteousness and Holiness all the Days of my Life, according to the Precepts of thy Gospel, which thou hast inforc'd by thy holy Example, and sealed by thy meritorious sufferings. *Amen.*

A

*A P R A Y E R after Receiving in
both Kinds.*

ALL Glory, and Praise, and Adoration be given to thee, O Lord, for all thy Benefits, especially for thy Son, for his Life and Death, Resurrection and Ascension; for his Doctrine and for his Example; for the Appointment of this *Memorial Feast*; for thy gracious Invitation of poor Sinners to thy Table, and for thy admitting me the unworthiest of them to partake of thy spiritual Duties. Let me never forget this Love, or cease to remember this dear Lord; but carry the Thoughts of him and it into all my Affairs, that they may regulate and direct the Actions of my Life, to the promoting his Honour, and expressing my acknowledgments of his Goodness: That so at last I may partake of his Glory, and enjoy the full manifestation of his Love, through his Merits and Mediation, in his Heavenly and Everlasting Kingdom. *Amen.*

Another.

for the Lord's Supper. 143

Another.

O Lord, I have now once more, in confidence with thy gracious assistance, entred into a solemn Resolution against my sins, to be more watchful over my ways, and to have more regards unto thy Laws, I most humbly and penitently implore thy pardon for my manifold breaches of such sacred Vows, those at Baptism, and others since at thy Table: And now earnestly beseech thee to afford me such measures of that Grace, which thy Son hath purchased and promised, as may be sufficient to strengthen my natural weakness, and to overcome my powerful temptations; that I may serve thee acceptably, and faithfully, all the Days of my Lite; through Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord, Thou hast sealed to me the Covenant of thy Grace more to me in and through thy Son,
and

144 Forms of Prayers, &c.

and assur'd me of the Forgiveness of my Sins, the Power of thy Grace, the Light of thy Countenance, and the Enjoyment of thy Love, upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance. Lord, I must submissively praise thy Divine Majesty for this Grace and wonderful Condescension, in entring into Covenant with such a worthless Sinner ; I for ever love and adore thy blessed Son, my dear Saviour, for the Merits of his Life and Death, by which he hath satisfied thy Justice and procured this gracious Covenant. Help me, O Lord, to abound more and more in Acts of devout Praise and holy Love ; and to give constant heed to the diligent and sincere Performance of those reasonable Conditions which thou hast required, and I have accepted and engaged to fulfil : That I may obtain the Effects of thy gracious Promises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

6 MA 50

F I N I S.

y
e
-
-
l,
e
ul
e-
I
n,
is
s-
t-
d,
of
co
d
le
d,
to
ts
as